

ELEGANTLY INTRIGUING: FORM, FUNCTION, AND MULTISENSORY
AESTHETICS IN HEIAN WOMEN'S INTERIOR SPACE

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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This thesis investigates the roles of partitions (shutters, blinds, screens, and curtains) within eleventh-century Japanese palace architecture known as *shinden-zukuri*. Using classical literature, I analyze how noblewomen used partitions to position themselves as active subjects in their social engagements by controlling the attention and perception of visitors. Chapter 1 evaluates the multisensorial stimuli created by a partitioned courtly interior space. Chapter 2 focuses on partitions as mediating devices around women on two topics: spatial articulations of their purity, health, and bodily integrity; and the act of concealment and revelation as a mechanism to emphasize their presence, comparable to the environment surrounding a “hidden” Buddha (*hibutsu*). Preceding studies describe veiled sequestration as oppressive towards noblewomen. By shifting the focus to women's use of partitions within their living space, this thesis reveals how women took advantage of the open layout of *shinden-zukuri* to amplify their presence as beautiful, intriguing, and powerful individuals.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

On the lack of tangible material sources from the Heian period, Yui Suzuki stated:

Art historians (including myself) are less likely to conduct research on things they cannot visibly apprehend. Nevertheless, I believe that despite the limited written sources and material remains related to Enryakuji and the Tendai school, such research is an endeavor that must be braved if we are ever to have a comprehensive picture of Heian religious and artistic culture.¹

This problem is endemic of studies of the arts and architecture of the Heian period (794-1185), and especially true of the aristocratic villas, none of which survive today. Built in a configuration known as *shinden-zukuri* 寝殿造 (lit. “sleeping hall construction”), the main and subsidiary structures of the estate were connected by covered bridgeways, forming a raised, u-shaped complex which extended through artificial gardens, ponds, and streams (Figure 1).² Like most examples of premodern post-and-lintel architecture of Japan, early residential buildings did not survive the centuries of fire, earthquakes, and war following the Heian period.³

A unique feature of *shinden-zukuri* architecture was its dependence on a variety of partitions (including shutters, sliding doors, blinds, standing curtains, and screens) instead of walls to divide open space according to the needs of its inhabitants. Except for a small plaster-walled room at the center, most residents spent their days in a semi-outdoor state in which the sights, sounds, and smells of the garden flowed inside. Without walls, one

¹ Yui Suzuki, *Medicine Master Buddha: The Iconic Worship of Yakushi in Heian Japan* (Boston: Brill, 2012) 45.

² I will interchangeably refer to *shinden-zukuri* buildings as villas, palaces, and estates because the Japanese term applies to buildings which are described in English using these terms. For more information on the three different types of building complexes denoted by *shinden-zukuri* see William Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996) 83.

³ Some examples of *shinden-zukuri* buildings remain but have undergone major reconstruction. The Imperial Palace in Kyōto was last rebuilt in 1855 after being burnt down and relocated multiple times over centuries, and different areas of reconstruction reflect different historical architectural styles.

might expect residents to feel vulnerable in a space where privacy was seemingly impossible.⁴ Unlike solid walls, which would need to be smashed or broken to be violated, the boundaries established by partitions could easily be transgressed by something as simple as peeking through a gap or moving aside a screen. Privacy is especially important to consider with regards to women because they did not leave their living quarters, except on rare occasions, and thus their sense of bodily autonomy and agency was deeply connected to their architectural environment.⁵

This study focuses on the relationship between Heian noblewomen and the interior design of their living environment, particularly their use of partitions. During the Heian period, the courtly custom demanded that a noblewoman stay away from any uninvited male gaze. Both men and women lived in and could inherit *shinden-zukuri* residences, but women were fixed in place and rarely left the house, while men traveled between multiple domiciles and the imperial palace.⁶ Scholars have closely examined the

⁴ In his introduction to his translation of a Heian-period diary, Richard Bowring states: “The lack of a sense of boundary was reflected inside as well, where a ‘room’ might well consist of nothing more than a ‘tent’ of curtains. At busy times one’s room might even have to be set up in the corridor that skirted round the outside. Privacy in such an environment was impossible, especially as the space above the ‘room’ divisions must have been open to the roof, with all that meant for overhearing conversations.” Richard Bowring, introduction to *The Diary of Lady Murasaki* (*Murasaki shikibu nikki* 紫式部日記) (New York: Penguin Books, 1996).

⁵ The Oxford English Dictionary defines privacy as “a state in which one is not observed or disturbed by other people, or the state of being free from public attention.” Mosby’s medical dictionary defines privacy as “a culturally specific concept defining the degree of one’s personal responsibility to others in regulating behavior that is regarded as intrusive. Some privacy-regulating mechanisms are physical barriers (closed doors or drawn curtains, such as around a hospital bed) and interpersonal types (lowered voices or cessation of smoking).”

⁶ Women often inherited place names as a type of aristocratic title (e.g. Kiritsuboin 桐壺院, “she of the Paulownia Pavilion”, referring to a specific area in the women’s quarters of the Imperial Palace). Men could receive these titles too. For example, Fujiwara Sanesuke 藤原実資, 957-1046, received the title Go-Ononomiya 後小野宮 upon the inheritance of the Ononomiya family estate. However, men often had additional titles, such as Sanesuke’s title as Minister of the Right (*udaijin* 右大臣), which in historical records can take precedence over titles related to estates. For more on the inheritance of properties by women, see Wakita Haruko and Suzanne Gay, “Marriage and Property in Premodern Japan from the Perspective of Women’s History” in *Journal of Japanese Studies* 10, no. 1 (1984): 73-99. For more on the Ononomiya residence, see William McCullough, “The Capital and its Society: Life in the Mansion” in *The Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 2: Heian Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 144.

ways in which this particular architectural form empowered male courtiers, but the relationship between women and *shinden-zukuri* has only recently become a topic of extended consideration.⁷ Often, on the topic of *shinden-zukuri* and the aristocratic lifestyle with its partitioned interior spaces, this environment is portrayed as oppressive for women, who were simultaneously erased by male voyeurism and bound to passively endure the ideals of feminine modesty and sequestration enforced by patriarchal society.⁸

In this context, partitions are typically considered solely as the sites of intrusive male gaze that violated a noblewoman's privacy and penetrated her body.⁹ This study aims to decouple the association between the male gaze and partitions. I am in full agreement with preceding research regarding the historical influence of male authority on Heian women's lives, but a focus on male enforcement of female modesty tends to assume that Heian women had little to no bodily autonomy and that, freed of any patriarchal influence, they would have chosen to live elsewhere or under different conditions. Rather than considering the courtly residence as an exclusively patriarchal space, I argue that women utilized the *shinden-zukuri* environment and partitions that surround them to fashion themselves as powerful and autonomous individuals, not

⁷ For instance, William Coaldrake argues that the exterior style of *shinden-zukuri* enabled expressions of male authority through architectural motifs. Kawamoto Shigeo on the other hand examines how the open and colonnaded structure facilitated noble spectatorship of rituals, ceremonies, and concerts. Both of these may be considered as having had a sociopolitical benefit for the male courtier who commissioned and/or designed the building, or as the host of social events. William Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996). Kawamoto Shigeo 川本重雄, *Shinden-zukuri no kūkan to gishiki* 寝殿造の空間と儀式 (*Space and Ceremony of shinden-zukuri*) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2005).

⁸ Major studies include: Ivan Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince: Court Life in Ancient Japan* (New York: Random House, 1964); Penelope Mason, *History of Japanese Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993) 105; McCullough, *The Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 2: Heian Japan*, 144.

⁹ Literary scholar Doris Bargen has already challenged the view that women were imprisoned victims of the patriarchy, arguing that partitions enabled women to self-select the visibility of their bodies and consensually engage in being seen by men from behind a partition. I summarize and expand on her argument in Chapter 2, section 2, "Impressions and Revelations of the Body." Doris Bargen, *Mapping Courtship and Kinship in Classical Japan: The Tale of Genji and its Predecessors* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).

subordinate or imprisoned objects, which enabled them to take control over the social engagements which occurred in her home

Chapter 1 examines the functionality of partitions to demonstrate the effects these objects had on the aesthetics of space, which includes their impact on environmental lighting, acoustics, temperature, textures, and odors. Chapter 2 provide case studies in which partitions (or partition-like elements) were used as mediating devices around women in order to express meaning about her person, centering on two topics: spatial articulations relating to purity, health, and bodily integrity; and how partitions were used to improve appearances and draw attention towards women in ways which benefitted her image and authority.

What becomes clear through these case studies is that the *shinden-zukuri* architecture could be manipulated to produce a complex sensory environment which determined the way inhabitants were perceived by others. Through the strategic placement of physical partitions, combined with the careful layering of other thresholds of a more sensory nature (such as incense, music, voices, hems of colorful robes, etc.), court women could control the attention of visitors who entered their space, creating different modalities of intrigue (attraction) and taboo (deference).¹⁰ Ultimately, this study demonstrates how partitions were used to present aristocratic women as sacred, intangible, and beautiful by means of their interior architectural space. Sanctity and beauty comprised the public image these women were expected to uphold, and thus the form and

¹⁰ I use the word “taboo” in reference to coded social behaviors around someone or something which is sacred or prohibited, following Herman Ooms’ application of the word in reference to practices associated with the emperor, as I will discuss further in Chapter 2. I use this word to mean something/someone which is of high status, such as an emperor or a religious icon, rather than considering a taboo as something which is considered fundamentally abject or perverse (e.g. cannibalism or incest). Royall Tyler also uses the word “taboo” (*imi* 忌, or *kotoimi* 事忌) in his translation of the *Genji* to refer to prescribed practices such as directional taboos (*kataimi* 方忌) and taboo speech (*kotoimi* 言忌).

functionality of this space would have enabled them to maintain their social status and authority as noblewomen.

This project employs Heian-period literature as primary sources to show the relationship between women and their environment. The three works I will be relying on most are the *Pillow Book* (*Makura no sōshi* 枕草子), *The Diary of Lady Murasaki* (*Murasaki Shikibu nikki* 紫式部日記; hereinafter *The Diary*), and *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語; hereinafter the *Genji*).¹¹ The first two texts are chronicles written by women, Sei Shōnagon (清少納言, ca. 966-1025) and Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 973-1031), who served as gentlewomen to two empresses from the most powerful courtier family, the Fujiwara, around the turn of the eleventh century. Sei Shōnagon's *Pillow Book* was written during her time in service to the Empress Teishi (Fujiwara no Teishi 藤原定子, 976-1001). Sei was the daughter of a provincial governor, and she entered Teishi's court service in 993 and left just after Teishi's death in 1001. The *Pillow Book* was completed during the year 1002.¹² Murasaki Shikibu's *Diary* was written during her time in service to the Empress Shōshi (Fujiwara no Shōshi or Akiko 藤原彰子, 988-1074), whose reign overlapped with that of Teishi.¹³ Murasaki Shikibu was from a

¹¹ Sei Shōnagon, trans. Meredith McKinney, *The Pillow Book* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006). Murasaki Shikibu, trans. Richard Bowring, *The Diary of Lady Murasaki* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996). Murasaki Shikibu, trans. Royall Tyler, *The Tale of Genji* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001).

¹² Some passages of the *Pillow Book* were written during her service to Teishi, while other sections represent long-transpired memories after Teishi's death, or commentary added to previous entries. Much of *Makura no sōshi* is set at the Imperial Palace, but Sei and her fellow gentlewomen also traveled along with Teishi on a variety of excursions to other aristocratic palaces and temples. Sei lived in the Imperial Palace for much of her time at court, but would also frequently travel home to observe abstinences, or go on excursions without Teishi. McKinney, xviii-xxiv.

¹³ Both Teishi (daughter of Fujiwara no Michitaka 藤原道隆) and Shōshi (daughter of Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長, later known as Jōtōmon-in 上東門院) were empresses to Emperor Ichijō (一条天皇, r. 986-1011). Teishi was appointed in 990 as the "Lustrous Heir-bearer" (*kōgō* 皇后), then became a nun sometime before the birth of Ichijō's first son (Prince Atsuyasu 敦康親王) in 1001. She died due to

less-powerful branch of the Fujiwara family, and entered Shōshi's court around 1000 when Shōshi entered the imperial harem. The diary begins with the birth of Prince Atsuhira 敦成親王 in 1008 and chronicles the approximate two years of time following this occasion. Shōshi (together with Murasaki) relocated from the imperial palace to her natal residence, the Tsuchimikado-dono 土御門殿, after she entered her second trimester. Several years later, Murasaki would write her epic novel, the *Genji* (ca. 1021), in which many scenes are set in both the (real) inner palace and elaborately detailed (but fictional) aristocratic villas. The *Tale of Genji* is a 54-chapter novel written by Murasaki Shikibu and depicts the illustrious life of the magnanimous Prince Genji, an illegitimate son of the emperor who lived the life as a member of a non-imperial aristocratic clan, the Genji (Minamoto). The *Pillow Book* and *The Diary* might appear factual as chronicles, and the *Genji* fictional as a tale or novel, but these designations can be misleading regarding their merit as primary sources. *Monogatari* (物語), a “tale” or “tales,” refers to a genre of narrative prose written in vivid colloquial language and calligraphic feminine script.¹⁴

The line between fiction and non-fiction was indistinct for writers of the Heian period,

complications a few days after birth. Shōshi was appointed as the second empress, “Inner Palatine” (*chūgū* 中宮) just a few days before Teishi was to give birth. As it was atypical to have two concurrent empresses, the title of second empress was coined for the occasion for Shōshi by her father, the patriarch Michinaga (966-1028) who was one of the most powerful regents to the imperial throne during the Heian period. Shōshi gave birth to Princes Atsuhira in 1008 and Atsunaga in 1011. When Ichijō died in 1011, Prince Atsuyasu (issue of Teishi) lacked sufficient backing at court due to the death of his mother. Shōshi's son Atsuhira ascended the throne as Emperor Go-Ichijō (後一条天皇, r. 1016-1036). William McCullough, *Cambridge History of Japan*, 67-69.

¹⁴ The two modes of script in the Heian period were called “man's hand” (*otoko-de* 男手) and “woman's hand” (*onna-de* 女手) correlated with masculinity and femininity. *Otoko-de* uses more Chinese characters and orthography, comparable to the use of Latin in a Western context, whereas *onna-de* uses primarily simplified phonetic characters and vernacular orthography. The gendered distinction of the two scripts derived more from the circumstances of their use. *Otoko-de* was the formal or official mode of writing, while *onna-de* was for private correspondences and poetry exchanges. Even though women did not receive training in Chinese to the same extent as men, they had access to Chinese characters and language through texts such as poetry and sutras.

and they did not define *monogatari* as “fiction” per se. Rather, the term *monogatari* signified a kind of realistic vernacular narrative that diverged from the official and masculine historiography of the state.¹⁵ Women appear in these *monogatari* interacting with or manipulating interior space in ways coherent with contemporaneous diaries, but often described in more vivid detail. For this reason, texts written by women remain as realistic portrayals of a feminine experience of Heian architectural space.

¹⁵ Naturally, this is not to say that all *monogatari* were equidistant to the “real.” However, fictional tales should not be written off as having no realistic basis. McCullough, *A tale of flowering fortunes: annals of Japanese aristocratic life in the Heian period* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980) 7.

CHAPTER II: ARCHITECTURE AND PARTITIONS

Shinden-zukuri refers to a style of architecture used in aristocratic mansions of the Heian period. Homes could be owned by men or women, but residences were typically passed from mother to daughter, or inherited by a husband upon marriage to his wife's family. Women typically continued living in their natal residences after marriage, and their husbands would visit them at these homes. This was considered a "wife visiting marriage" (*tsumadoikon* 妻問婚) or uxorilocal marriage. Virilocal residence, in which the wife moves to a property owned by the husband or the husband's family, was practiced in limited cases.¹⁶ Children were sometimes raised in the same wing of the house alongside their mother, gentlewomen, and wet nurses. After a certain age, or in moments of crisis, most aristocratic women were expected to take the tonsure as lay renunciants in a ceremony known as "leaving the house" (*shukke* 出家) which ended their lives as daughters and mothers, and initiated their life as a nun. *Shukke* indicated a detachment from their responsibilities as a daughter or mother in order to focus their time preparing for death, but notably, it did not necessarily involve a literal dislocation, as many women continued living at home.¹⁷

Shinden-zukuri complexes typically featured an elevated, u-shaped, south-facing building which encircled a garden on three sides.¹⁸ This style shares a common origin with the Imperial Palace, shrines, and temples, which were sited according to geomantic

¹⁶ Most notably, women moving to the Imperial Palace upon marriage to the emperor or an imperial prince.

¹⁷ Lori Meeks, "Buddhist Renunciation and the Female Life Cycle: Understanding Nunhood in Heian and Kamakura Japan" in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 70, no. 1 (2010): 1-59.

¹⁸ This arrangement is the average layout for *shinden-zukuri*, estimated from a variety of reconstructions. These reconstructions are based on archaeological evidence, courtly diaries, and *The Tale of Genji*. See McCullough, *Cambridge History of Japan*, 142.

principles to achieve the most auspicious placement possible. The term *shinden* refers to the central building which serves as the main living and sleeping quarters (Figure 1). The *shinden* runs on an east-west axis, and subsidiary buildings called *tainoya* are placed to the east and west of the central *shinden* and run on a north-south axis. The *shinden* and *tainoya* were connected by elevated bridges, and channels of water could be directed underneath the bridges. The two long corridors that form the “arms” of the building extend south from each of the *tainoya*. At the end of each corridor, there could be pavilions which extended over artificial water features and might be used for fishing or other leisure activities. The grounds might also include a private chapel. Servants quarters, kitchens, gardens, storehouses, stables, and other more utilitarian facilities were often located in the peripheral areas of the property, and these buildings were neither elevated nor connected to the main house. Elevation from the ground increased airflow through the house, providing cooler air during hot months. The rivers running beneath the house cooled the air while providing the relaxing sights and sounds of babbling water.

The *shinden* was further subdivided into three concentric zones of space (Figure 2). There was a central *moya* 母屋 (lit. “mother room”), surrounded by an aisle or *hisashi* 廂, then a veranda. The *moya* is raised one step (the width of one beam) above the aisle, and the aisle one step above the veranda. The *hisashi* may be further subdivided into an inner *hisashi* and an auxiliary *magobisashi* 孫廂 (lit. “grandchild corridor”, indicating an exterior subsection of the aisle). Part of the *moya* includes a plaster-walled room known as *nurigome* 塗籠, often referred to in English as a retreat, in which valuables and other pieces of furniture were stored. The principle resident of the space usually slept in a curtained bed in the *moya* space, though some might choose to move the bed into the

nurigome. Except for the walls of the *nurigome*, the remaining space was colonnaded and open to the exterior. This created a large open “room” which could be further subdivided by partitions.

Two main types of partitions were employed to divide open space into smaller units. The first type of partition can be referred to as architectural fixtures, correlating to the Japanese word *tategu* 建具. These are lattice shutters, blinds, and sliding panels that could be engaged to the exterior structure. The second type is moveable furniture

(*kadōshiki no chōdo*

可動式の調度) and refers to standing curtains and folding screens. Unlike architectural fixtures, some of which were theoretically removable, but acted more like conventional walls or windows, movable partitions were relatively lightweight and portable, thus could be placed freely around the room to create individual cubicles of space and/or enclose a person. From today’s perspective, these partitions—particularly the second type—escape neat conceptual categorization, as they could share characteristics with what we might consider “architecture,” “furniture” or even “costume” in the sense of a material layer which mediates the external perception of one’s body. Even among the partitions within the same general category, each may behave differently in terms of its impact on the ambience of the space: permeability to light and air, how they are moved or operated, and the way they are layered throughout the room could all be manipulated to produce certain physical effects in space.

2.1 Architectural Fixtures

Lattice shutters called *shitomi* 藪 (or *shitomido* 藪戸, or *hajitomi* 半藪) were architectural fixtures which separated the exterior veranda from the inner corridor. The shutters might be floor-to-ceiling (*ichimai kōshi* 一枚格子), which could be raised or lowered from the bottom, or double panel (*nimai kōshi* 二枚格子), the two halves of which could be raised or lowered independently. The panels were made of a crisscross pattern of wood and paper and could be opened or closed like windows to let in light, air, and views of the garden (Figure 3). They also functioned like doors or gates which controlled movement between the outer veranda/inner corridor and could be locked.

Servants would typically close the shutters at nighttime, then re-open them at dawn when the watch bell rang. Sometimes, however, they would be left open overnight to keep the building cool, which increased the risk of being seen. For instance,

In the seventh month, when the heat is dreadful, everything in the building is kept open all through the night, and it's delightful to wake on moonlit nights and lie there looking out. Dark nights too are delightful, and as for the sight of the moon at dawn, words cannot describe the loveliness. Picture her lying there, on a fresh new mat placed near the outer edge of the gleaming wooden aisle-room floor, the low standing curtain pushed to the back of the room in a quite unseemly way. It should normally be placed at the outer edge, but perhaps she's concerned about being seen from within.¹⁹

In this particular passage, Sei is writing an imaginary scene in the style of romance tales, wherein the heat of summer months forcibly opens the house and exposes its inhabitants. Shutters might also be left open overnight, even in the dead of winter, because it made for more picturesque and relaxing parties.

¹⁹ McKinney, 37.

On the other hand, it's charming when, be it night time or dawn, undue care hasn't been taken over the gate, and various ladies in service in the household of one of the princes, or from the palace or one of the great houses, appear together to greet the visitor. The lattice shutters are left raised, everyone sits talking right through the winter night till first light, and after the guest has left they linger there to watch his departing figure. It's even finer if there's a moon in the dawn sky.²⁰

When gentlewomen did not sleep in their own living quarters of the estate (the *daibandokoro-rō* 台盤所廊, lit. "table room") they slept one step below their lady in the corridors surrounding her sleeping area. When their mistress received guests, the gentlewomen would frequently act as her avatars and interact with the guests on her behalf, speaking as if with the noblewoman's own voice. Murasaki described in her diary an instance when two men, Fujiwara no Sanenari 藤原実成 (The Assistant Master of the Prince's Household, b. 975-d. 1044) and Fujiwara no Tadanobu 藤原齊信 (The Master of Her Majesty's Household, b. 967-d. 1035), came calling for Empress Shōshi during the middle of the night.²¹ When the ladies inside the corridor did not answer, Sanenari pulled up the top half of the shutter so as to get the attention of the women inside. They insisted that Murasaki also remove the bottom panel so that they could enter the space, but Murasaki refused. In this instance, the gentlewomen acted as a human barrier doubled with the lattice shutter to completely conceal the lady Shōshi inside (Figure 4).

The next type of architectural fixture used in the living quarters are bamboo blinds (*sudare* or *su* 簾, or *misu* 御簾) which could be affixed to rafters on the ceiling, like shutters, and partially or fully rolled up. These could be placed between the veranda and the corridor, or between the corridor and the inner *moya*, and might be used in tandem with shutters (Figure 5). *Sudare* are more translucent than the papered lattice

²⁰ Ibid., 165.

²¹ Bowring, 85-87.

shutters, and in this sense they might be aesthetically comparable to a glass window.

Unlike glass, however, people could clearly speak to each other through blinds, and the bamboo beams absorbed scent; Sei and some other gentlewomen remarked that they could smell the lingering presence of a visiting captain after his perfumed had soaked into the blinds.²²

Blinds were much more lightweight and easily moved than the heavier lattice shutters, though they made some clatter when they were moved. In the *Pillow Book*, Sei describes a list of “infuriating things” which includes the ways that the noise of a man entering or leaving one’s living quarters betrayed their nocturnal communion.

A man you’ve had to conceal in some unsatisfactory hiding place, who then begins to snore. Or, a man comes on a secret visit wearing a particularly tall lacquered cap, and of course as he scuttles in hastily he manages to knock it against something with a loud bump. I also hate it when a rough reed blind catches on the head as someone passes underneath, and makes that scratchy noise. And if someone lowers the weighted bottom of one of the fine reed blinds too roughly, you can clearly hear the knock as it falls – if you raise it carefully as you go through, it won’t make a sound. It’s also ridiculous the way people will put open a wooden sliding door so roughly. Surely it wouldn’t make that clatter if they’d lift it a little as they push. Sliding panel doors will also make a distinct rattling noise if you open them clumsily.²³

These little noises would have been innocuous if it were not for the large number of people sleeping in and around the area through which the man was traveling. Even in pitch darkness, the scratch of a lacquered cap combined with the knock of the blinds or the rattling of a door betrayed the fact that a man was present, giving these sounds a weightier meaning in the darkness.

²² “The scent of incense is a most elegantly intriguing thing. I well remember the truly wonderful scent that wafted from Captain Tadanobu as he sat leaning by the blind of the Little Door of Her Majesty’s room one day during the long rains of the fifth month. The blend was so subtle there was no distinguishing its ingredients. Of course it’s natural that scent is enhanced by the moisture of a rainy day, but one couldn’t help remarking on it even so. It was no wonder that the younger ladies were so deeply impressed at the way it lingered until the following day in the blind he’d been leaning against.” McKinney, 183.

²³ Ibid., 28.

In the above quote, Sei references one of two different kinds of doors found in *shinden-zukuri*. The first type are sliding doors or panels (*shōji* 障子, or *fusuma* 襖) which could be moved along a track on the ground in both directions. Sliding panels were covered in silk or paper and could be painted, often with landscapes containing seasonal or poetic motifs. The second type were wooden doors (*tsumado* 妻戸, lit. “wife doors”) which could be swung open or closed. Sliding panels and doors could be locked and might be used to more forcibly separate two or more people. For example, when their parents decide to separate Yūgiri and Kumoi no Kari in the *Genji*, the children were put into two separate rooms subdivided by locked sliding panels. They were intentionally kept distant from each other in the house so that Yūgiri could not hear the sound of Kumoi no Kari’s *koto* 箏 (a type of zither), because the sound would further ignite his adolescent attraction to her.²⁴ *Genji*’s choice of *kumoi* 雲居 (“fog-filled heavens”) suggests distance or obscurity, and the lonely cry of the *kari* 雁 (goose) parallels the sound of her music and voice. The character conventionally known as *Kumoi no kari* is remembered as the distant and melancholic sound heard across a sliding panel which Yūgiri found so magnetically attractive as a child.

Sometimes, blinds were used in lieu of lattice shutters. When the regent died in the sixth month of 995, members of the imperial family were moved out of their residences in the inner palace in order to perform the Great Purification ceremony (*oharae* 御祓). This was a Shinto ritual that took a full eight days to perform and

²⁴ “It had never normally been locked, but it was this time, quite firmly, and there was no sound within. He lingered there miserably, leaning against it. Meanwhile the young lady awoke to hear bamboo rustling in welcome to the wind and a passing wild goose utter a faint cry, and in the turmoil of her girlish feelings she murmured to herself, “Is the goose on high sad as I am sad?” (footnote: *Kumoi no kari*, an expression from *Genji monogatari kochūshakusho in yō waka* 165: “Is the goose on high in the fog-filled heavens sad as I am sad? Why does my melancholy never clear?”]” Tyler, *Genji*, 385-390.

cleansed the palace of any lingering pollution. Teishi and her staff relocated to the Aitadokoro, an older building used for ceremonies and banquets that was a part of the greater palace and not typically considered a residence. Teishi was meant to relocate to the Office of the Empress's Household, but a directional taboo was in observance at the time and the group instead had to move to an unoccupied building.²⁵

Our first night there was hot and extraordinarily dark, and we spent it feeling cramped and rather anxious as we waited for the dawn. The following morning we took a look at the building. It was in the Chinese style, very flat, with a low tiled roof, and altogether quite unusual-looking. Instead of the customary lattice shutters, it was enclosed only by blinds... The Aitadokoro was incredibly hot, perhaps owing to the extreme age of the building and the fact that the roof was tiled, and at night we slept out on the veranda, beyond the blinds. What's more, because it was so old, the place was plagued by creatures known as centipedes which kept dropping from the ceiling all day long, and also great wasps' nests where the wasps gathered and clung, which was all quite terrifying.²⁶

Since this space was not intended as a residence, there was no need for lattice shutters to lock the building at night. Repairs and cleaning were typically done much more regularly on occupied villas, and a house which outwardly appeared to be in disarray or filthy was considered a poor reflection of character, or a sign that the house's owner was failing to adequately support its inhabitants. This passage suggests that insects were a concern for those positioned closest to the veranda, but perhaps not so much for those inside the blinds, as a fully-closed screen would inhibit crawling and flying vermin. This also suggests that Chinese-style buildings with tiled roofs were more uncomfortable and therefore less desirable for inhabitants during the summer.

²⁵ "Directional taboo" (*kataimi* 方忌) refers to the practice of avoiding travel in certain cardinal directions on prescribed days in order to avoid displeasing the gods. Ibid, 1145.

²⁶ Ibid., 155-156.

2.2 Movable Furniture

Partitions, which fall under the second category of movable furniture, include items such as folding screens (*byōbu* 屏風) and standing curtains (*kichō* 几帳). Folding screens came to Japan by way of China as one-paneled silk-covered standing screens, now called *tsuitate* 衝立. They developed into paneled screens which folded accordion-style and could be placed around a room. The characters in *byōbu* mean “wind fence,” and folding screens could be used to shield against the outdoor elements like wind and rain to which residents were exposed in their living quarters (Figure 6). The screens were usually painted, and might be accompanied by a genre of calligraphic poetry known as “screen poems” (*byōbu uta* 屏風歌). *Byōbu* were used to mix the exterior space of the garden with the interior space of the home by means of these seasonal motifs.²⁷ Women could see, hear, and smell the changing flora and fauna of their gardens from inside their home, and the decorated screens functioned as an intermediary object that they could use to interact with or reflect upon their experiences of the external world.

Folding screens and sliding doors had an acoustical effect on this space. Today, they are sometimes used as a backdrop to musicians during performances of court music or *gagaku* 雅楽 (Figure 7).²⁸ *Gagaku* uses plucked string, percussion, and wind instruments, including the double reed *hichiriki* 篳篥, which, much like Western double reeds (oboes and bassoons) can be loud and grating to the ears when played at too close

²⁷ Haruo Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013) 90-93.

²⁸ For videos of performances of these instruments, see for instance: Research Center for Japanese Traditional Music at Kyōto City University of Arts, titled “Music from *The Tale of Heike* (Part 1): Heian and Kamakura period court music sounds like *this*?!” Last updated March 2019. <https://rejt.m.kcu.ac.jp/archives/takuwa20121013openschool.html>

of range.²⁹ These instruments would have required many hours of practice in a communal living environment outside of formal performances.

Sound was also a concern because living quarters were often full of people making noise, including children and infants. Sei comments that children ensconced behind a screen “can’t laugh loudly or generally make a noise as they do in other rooms.”³⁰ However, partitions made of paper, silk, and wood did not fully mute sounds emanating from the other side, and quiet sounds heard in the absence of visual information are often perceived differently, much in the way that floorboards creaking in the night or twigs snapping outside a tent can more intensely capture a person’s attention. Sei describes the sounds of “elegantly intriguing scenes” heard from behind a partition, including the soft and elegant clap of a noblewoman’s hands, the youthful voice and swishing silk of her responsive attendant, the sounds of chopsticks, spoons, and the clinking of a teapot. These quiet noises “arrest the ear” (*mimikosotomare* 耳こそとまれ) and, like voices whispering in the dark, are “intriguing” because they demand to be listened to.³¹

²⁹ According to the *Pillow Book*, “the little *hichiriki* is very hard on the ear. The autumn insect its sound most resembles is the shrill giant cricket, and you certainly don’t want to hear it from close by. It’s even worse when it’s played badly.” McKinney, 186.

³⁰ Sei Shōnagon on the gentlewomen’s living quarters at the palace: “Our apartments in the Long Room are a marvelous place. With the upper shutters raised, there’s a good breeze, and it’s wonderfully cool in summer. It’s also delightful in winter when snow or hail comes blowing in. The rooms are small, and it’s rather a problem when there are children around, but at least when they’re ensconced behind a screen they can’t laugh loudly and generally make a noise, as they do in other rooms” Ibid., 62. The “long room” refers to the *hisashi*, and the apartments refer to the cubicles of space created by the screens. McKinney notes that this behavior may have had something to do with their close proximity to the Empress’s quarters.

³¹ “*Elegantly intriguing things (kokoronikukimono 心にくきもの)* – It’s delightful to hear, through a wall or partition of some sort, the sound of someone, no mere gentlewoman, softly and elegantly clap her hands for service. Then, still separated from view behind, perhaps, a sliding door, you hear a youthful voice respond, and the swish of silk as someone arrives. It must be time for a meal to be served, for now come the jumbled sounds of chopsticks and spoons, and then the ear is arrested by the sudden metallic clink of a pouring-pot’s handle falling sideways and knocking against the pot. . . . A person who stays up late is always elegantly intriguing. You wake in the night to lie there listening through the partition, and realize from the

Standing curtains (also known as “curtains of state” in English) were portable, wooden, post-and-lintel frames upon which swathes of fabric, known as *katabira* (帷 or 帷子), could be draped (Figure 8). The frames themselves were only about four feet high, but because people were seated on the floor, they were mostly hidden at eye-level. However, there was a small gap between the lintel and the silk, and this might offer a glimpse of the person on the other side.³² Curtains could also be hung from the ceiling, similar to bamboo blinds. The same types of fabrics hung on standing curtains were also used on canopied beds known as *chōdai* 帳台 (Figure 9). The textiles which filled this space varied in texture, weight, translucency, color, and pattern depending on the time period, time of year, and individual courtier’s taste.³³ Courtiers made an effort to coordinate the fabrics across interior space in order to produce seasonally-appropriate effects. For example, the fabrics chosen during the summer months, such as diaphanous gossamer silks in white, blue, and lavender were often described as a “cool-looking” counterpoint to the blazing heat and humidity of summer months.³⁴ Standing curtains

sounds that someone is still up. You can’t hear what is said, but you catch the sound of a man’s soft laugh, and you long to know what they’re saying together.” Ibid., 181.

³² “A three-foot standing curtain has been set up inside the blind, but there’s a small gap below the blind’s lintel cloth and the top of the curtain, and it’s pleasing to see how well their two faces are aligned as they talk to each other from their opposite sides, she sitting inside and he standing without.” Ibid., 63.

³³ “Damasks, brocades, and bombycines, mentioned in the description of Princess Teishi’s screens and curtains, were among the principal fabrics worn by members of the upper classes, who dressed almost exclusively in silks. Except for a brief early period, Heian weaving and dyeing techniques were less varied than those of the eighth century, during which the Japanese had mastered tie-dyeing, stenciling, and batik techniques and skillfully imitated a wide assortment of continental weaves, including rich damasks, many types of brocades with striking designs, and intricately woven chiffon-like gauzes. Heian brocades employed fewer colors and smaller designs, the gauzes were less elaborate, and the damasks fell below Nara standards... The changes represented a response to a changing aesthetic—a new interest in subdued effects, achieved not by flamboyant polychromes but by the graceful, flowing lines and subtle monochromes of wide-sleeved robes, woven of luxurious but unassertive fabrics and worn in voluminous layers.” Helen McCullough, “Aristocratic Culture: Textiles and Costumes” in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, 394.

³⁴ For the entry regarding Sei’s visit to the home of a commander in the Shirakawa area to the east of the city, she comments: “The only way to induce any sense of delicious coolness [*ito suzushiki kokochi suru* いと涼しき心地する] was to rest your eyes on the lotuses in the pond. Apart from the Ministers of the Left

could be festooned with ribbons (*nosuji* 野筋) and dyed in various colors, patterns or embroidered with motifs of branches, flowers, and birds.

Curtains could be paired with other partitions, such as folding screens or lattice shutters, to create a double-layered insulating barrier using thicker or padded textiles during colder months. The material of the curtains, as with bamboo blinds and silk robes, absorbs moisture and scent. Incense was burned to fill the room with a strong and neutralizing fragrance, and textiles were warmed and scented by laying them across a censer frame (Figure 10). The silk would quickly become dirty when they were not regularly washed and changed. In chapter 6 “Safflower” (“Suetsumuhana” 末摘花) and chapter 15 “A Waste of Weeds” (“Yomogi” 蓬生), Genji visits the dilapidated mansion belonging to the late Prince of Hitachi’s daughter, Suetsumuhana, who hides away from the world in a rotting house.³⁵ Numerous references are made to the shabby, grubby, and sweat-stained textiles which fill her home, including her own clothes, her gentlewomen’s clothes, and her curtains.³⁶ Genji’s first compassionate act towards Suetsumuhana is to provide her with fresh textiles (silks, silk twills, cotton wadding, and clothing for her

and Right, all court nobles were present. The younger ones were dressed in lavender gathered trousers and cloaks, with light-blue summer under-robos visible beneath, while those a little older created a wonderfully cool impression [*ito suzushigenari* いと涼げなり] in blue-grey gathered trousers and white skirted trousers.” McKinney, 34. Later, in a different passage describing a hot day: “When the three-foot standing curtain, with its marvelously cool-looking drapes, is pushed aside, it glides surprisingly far along the shiny floor – and there, near where it comes to rest, a lady is reclining.” Ibid., 178. “Marvellously cool-looking” (*ito suzushigeni mieru* いと涼しげに見えたる) merges the tactile sensation of chilliness with the color and texture of the drapes.

³⁵ Suetsumuhana’s neglect comes partially from her own stubbornness and attachment to the past by preserving her house (including its furnishings) almost exactly as it was when her father died. Her intense shyness and fear of the outside world, taught to her by her father, prevents her from moving on, and she remains in a state of denial about her decaying house. Melissa McCormick shows how Genji’s selfless compassion towards the resistant Suetsumuhana represents a Buddhist conversion. McCormick, *The Tale of Genji: A Visual Companion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

³⁶ “At last she managed to have her carriage drawn up at the raised lattice shutters on the south side, where to her niece’s mounting horror, Jijū came forth, thrusting an utterly filthy standing curtain ahead of her.” Tyler, *Genji*, 305.

gentlewomen) to make her living space inhabitable. He worries that the “most unusual presents” might offend her because they included “things that no one would normally have dared to give her.”³⁷ These gifts might have been considered offensive or embarrassing because they were requisite materials to maintain a tolerable level of spatial hygiene, and Suetsumuhana’s lack of “self-control” represented a sense of fear and apathy.

Costume and curtains share a close relationship with one another because both were used to signify social status. A courtier’s clothing and accessories were an important signifier of rank in the bureaucratic organization of the Heian court system. Certain colors, including colors produced through the strategic layering of different garments (*kasane* 重ね), were allowed or prohibited depending on a person’s position in society (Figure 11). Color and pattern could also indicate time of year, and daily costume and household furnishings were swapped at the turn of each season. Textiles were stimulating materials for women, and court diaries reveal that women would often remember the smallest details of someone else’s outfit for many years after they saw it in person. When ceremonies and other public events were held at a courtier’s estate and women remained behind curtains or blinds, they might display the hems of their robes from beneath their screens or blinds in a practice known as *uchi’ide* 打出 (or sometimes *idashiginu* 位出し衣). Gentlewomen would arrange themselves around the southern-facing threshold to flaunt the hems of their outer garments, displaying especially luxurious colors and

³⁷ “He might have dropped Her Highness then and there if she had been quite ordinary and had had nothing remarkable about her one way or the other, but now that he had actually seen her, his sympathy for her was keener than ever, and he sent her constant messages together with thoroughly practical gifts: not sable furs but silks and silk twills, cotton wadding, or clothes for the old gentle-women and even (since his thoughtfulness embraced all, high or low) for the old gatekeeper. He was relieved when all this practicality seemed not to offend her, and he decided to look after her in this manner from now on. His most unusual presents included things that no one would normally have dared to give her.” Ibid., 126.

textures created through profuse application of gold and silver embroidery, lapis lazuli, precious jewels, and brocade (Figure 12). The hems of the robes were further layered with the curtains hanging around the exterior.³⁸ These displays orchestrated intrigue, drawing attention to their visual beauty and flamboyance--shimmering, rustling, tinkling, fluttering, and the luxuriousness of their scent and texture—stimulated the sensorium on multiple levels.

In choosing these examples, I have sought to expand the conversation around partitions to include both their visual and non-visual effects on space. Conventionally, a partition's *raison d'être* is associated with control over sight: partitions are removed to allow visual access to the garden, then replaced in order to stymie male voyeurism. However, as the ample accounts from literature betray, Heian interior spaces enabled multisensory communication to a significant extent through partitions. A similar holistic exploration of interior space already exists in other contexts. Scholars such as Bissera Pentcheva, for example, have shown how the colors, textures, and acoustical effects produced by the Hagia Sophia and Byzantine icons contributed to worshippers' sensations of reverence towards God.³⁹ Taking a more theoretical approach, Caroline Jones has shown how art historians tend to prioritize vision over the other senses, relating to a history of Enlightenment thinkers who stratified the sensorium (the body's sensory organs) into five discrete and hierarchical senses, as well as to "white cube" museum practices which reduce our experience with art objects to vision alone.⁴⁰

³⁸ Akazawa Mari, "The Borders of *Shinden-zukuri*: 'Inside' and 'Outside' as Staged by *Uchi'ide*" in *Studies in Japanese Literature and Culture* 1 (2018): 39-55.

³⁹ Bissera Pentcheva, "The Performative Icon." *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 88, no. 4, 2006, pp. 631–655. And, "Hagia Sophia and Multisensory Aesthetics." *Gesta* 50, no. 2 (2011): 93-111. See also Niall Atkinson, *The Noisy Renaissance: Sound, Architecture, and Florentine Urban Life* (Penn State University Press, 2016).

⁴⁰ Caroline Jones, *Sensorium: Embodied experience, technology, and contemporary art*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).

Heian literature, especially poetry, reveals the aesthetic tastes and preferences shared by the aristocracy, and these sensibilities informed people's perspectives on art and architecture. Poetry was considered the highest form of art during the Heian period, and courtiers were well trained in the study, composition, and vocal performance of classical standards and original poems during social events. Thomas LaMarre has called for a "synthetic" approach to the study of Heian poetry, or an approach which considers the "different registers of perception, sensation, and expression" employed by a poet, shifting away from an insistence on grammars, genres, and languages as the "grid of intelligibility" for Heian poetics.⁴¹ LaMarre's aim was to decenter what he sees as a singular scholarly emphasis on the verbal register in poetry, arguing instead for poems to be considered as a hybrid and layered "chorus and choreography" that resonate on a holistic level.⁴² In short, the embodied experience induced by a beautiful poem is a product of the concomitant and layered experience of the senses conveyed by text, image, and performance. For instance, LaMarre discusses a poem written by the author Ki no Tsurayuki (紀貫之, 872-945), the principal compiler of the court anthology *Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times* (*Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集, ca. 920) about the scent of plum blossoms in the dark.

⁴¹ Thomas LaMarre, *Uncovering Heian Japan: an archaeology of sensation and inscription* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000) 119.

⁴² "Poetry ranks highest because it comprises image, word, music, and gesture; it incorporates or synthesizes various modes of expression. Its virtues thus lie in its synthetic potential (not in linguistic purification)... Scholarly apparatus is heavily invested in philology, linguistics, and the isolation of the verbal register, and such an apparatus is inextricable from assumptions about the isolation, homogenization, and purification of national cultures and languages." Ibid., 124-125.

LaMarre notes:

By identifying that fragrance, the poet locates himself: since plums are harbingers of spring, he knows that he is on the cusp of spring. And so he concludes that, even in the darkness, he has signs. He knows his position in the cycle of things, for scent tells him exactly what sight would tell. Scent and sight become analogous modes of perception, but only insofar as both modalities entail orderly patterns. What does it matter if he cannot see so long as he can smell patterns and locate himself?⁴³

LaMarre describes Tsurayuki's obstruction of vision as a complication or overlap which enables patterns and rhythms to emerge, producing a multisensible resonance within an oblique mode of visibility.⁴⁴ The notion of locating oneself within patterns and cycles of nature relates to aspects of LaMarre's larger analysis of Heian poetry. LaMarre argues, through poetry expressed on verbal, calligraphic, visual, aural, olfactory, and haptic registers, courtiers observed and interpreted the resonances of cosmological patterns and seasonal cycles, such as the regular appearance of plum blossoms in spring. These signs were intrinsically tied to the stability of a social order expressed through rank, costume, and adherence to the various rules and procedures established by the court.⁴⁵ A breakdown of social order (for example, immoral political behavior), would produce negative cosmological signs such as a storm, drought, or epidemic that had direct and catastrophic implications on human bodies. In essence, the perpetuation of natural and

⁴³ The poem reads: "Cross the cusp of spring/waft scents of plums' flowers; though I cross the Dark Pass/in darkness, signs appear!" (*umenohana nihofu natsubeha kurafu yamayami ni koyuredoshiruku arikeru* 梅の花にほふ夏べはくらふ山闇にこゆれどしるくぞありける). Ibid., 172.

⁴⁴ "Many of Tsurayuki's poems play with the obstruction of seeing or the confusion of images. For instance, scattering petals evoke falling snows in the familiar mode of 'visual overlap' or *mitate*. But Tsurayuki does not complicate vision simply to play an elegant game. It is the complication of vision that enables patterns and rhythms to emerge, which enable us to sense resonance between terrestrial and celestial forms. In order to achieve this mode of visibility, Tsurayuki's poetics develop a logic in which poet and reader do not see directly but obliquely." Ibid., 172.

⁴⁵ "In Tsurayuki's poem about crossing Dark Pass, he shows us that olfaction can serve as well as vision in the recognition of patterns. The poem simply says, 'I know how to recognize rhythms, forms, and patterns and so I know how to compose them, properly and auspiciously.' Pattern recognition also opens the poem outward: however personal or individual Tsurayuki's style may be, it aligns itself with external patterns, and these are cosmological as well as social: they include seasons, dress and rank, rules of courtship, and so forth." Ibid., 174-175.

social order was dependent on individual and group behaviors, including appearance (wearing rank-appropriate uniforms, for instance) which reflected and reified one's position within that social order. The same can be said of the other senses: a courtier had to look, sound, smell, think, and act like a courtier at all times, as any incongruent or discordant sensations would threaten social and natural stability.⁴⁶

This aesthetic sensibility of Heian poetics relates to things which Sei describes as “elegantly intriguing,” (*kokoronikui* 心にこくい).⁴⁷ The moments described in the “Elegantly Intriguing Things” section of *The Pillow Book* “share the quality of arousing interest by their elegant suggestiveness of situations that can only be guessed at.”⁴⁸ In order for something to arouse intrigue in this manner, there needs to be a balance between known information and unknown information, like the scent of plum blossoms in the dark. Furthermore, different kinds of sensory information can attract attention differently. A loud and booming voice can be used to exercise a kind of power, as it has the capability to dramatically arrest the ear, and can often be perceived as masculine and aggressive, as it is tangibly painful to the eardrum. While it may be easier to misinterpret a quiet, feminine voice as shy or submissive, controlling one's own voice forces the listener to

⁴⁶ Ooms also seems to support this view with regards to purity, political power, and the senses. “These oppositions [social, sexual, age, gender, religious, spatial, and cultural distancing] all coded as pure or impure] define social universes that should spatially be kept separate, and are set up as negatively marked differences ultimately based on the undisputable reality of the senses, specifically olfactory repulsion, a kind of somatic doxa. The sense of smell impregnates one's entire being, collapsing instantaneously the felt into the known, producing in this way a most natural metaphor, unnoticed as such. Thus, the pure/impure binary metaphor can present itself as the fundamental opposition that defines the others.” Ooms, 265.

⁴⁷ *Kokoronikui* 心にこくい is also translatable in English as exquisite, marvelous, or superb according to the Shogakukan Progressive Japanese-English Dictionary, but the component characters mean “heart/spirit” and “detest,” which may seem to contradict the overwhelmingly positive image of elegance described by Sei. The Shogakukan Unabridged Dictionary lists the Heian-period definition for *kokoronikui* as “1. Things or people which are unclear that make you feel some kind of excellent quality, heartwarming, drawing you closer, making you feel that you want to know more. 2. 1: Expresses the attraction or desire to get close and know something that is uncertain, sensing a great quality in it; 2: Be attracted to uncertain things, having high expectations of them. To attract or make one feel anxious with anticipation; 3: Feel uneasy, alarmed, or suspicious because one does not clearly understand the status or nature of something.”

⁴⁸ McKinney, in a footnote to section no. 189, “Elegantly Intriguing Things.”

move closer, become quiet, or maybe even close their eyes or hold their breath in order to properly apprehend the delicacy of the words being spoken. Arresting the ear in this manner can be interpreted as an exercise of power, as it is the listener who is forced to adjust their bodies in space and focus their sensorium.

What particularly delights Sei in her observations of noble culture is the way in which men and women not only looked elegant but sounded and smelled elegant. When listening to an intimate moment between Teishi and another gentlewoman, each person is distinguishable by the sounds of their robes moving across the floor, because Sei can hear the tone and quality of their voices and sense where each person is in spatial relationship to one another.⁴⁹ The invisible scene is perceived as elegant because it aligns with her own expectations of elegant social conduct, similar to the way that the colorful flash of a young man's layered robes "really does catch attention with its elegant suggestiveness."⁵⁰ In both cases, sound and sight are analogous perceptual modes which contribute to a glamorous or exciting impression of a person as a whole, as the degree of someone's adherence to social standards should align with their position in society.

The level of analysis required to determine the overall quality of life for women in *shinden-zukuri* space would necessitate an immense amount of data and anecdotal evidence that is beyond the scope of this paper, and likely impossible given the limited

⁴⁹ "A lady new to the court, someone not of particularly impressive background but who the young gentlemen would naturally consider an object of elegant interest, is attending Her Majesty rather late at night. There's something attractively intimate in the sound of her silk robes as she enters and approaches Her Majesty on her knees. Her Majesty speaks quietly to her, and she shrinks like a child and responds in a barely audible voice. The whole feel of the scene is very quiet. It's also very elegant the way, when the gentlewomen are gathered seated here and there in the room talking, you hear the silk rustle of people as they leave or enter and, though it's only a soft sound, you can guess who each one would be." Ibid., 182.

⁵⁰ "What really does catch the attention with its elegant suggestiveness is the sight of a slender retainer dressed in graded-dye skirted trousers in lavender or some such colour, with upper robes of something appropriate – glossed silk, kerria-yellow – and shiny shoes, running along close to the axle as the carriage travels." Ibid., 183-184.

historical evidence that remains from the Heian period. However, in the following section, I broadly examine several different “case studies” of *shinden-zukuri* spaces, or specific occasions in which partitions were arranged in prescribed ways, to consider how these situations may have impacted the agency of a person enclosed within a layered cocoon of material and immaterial barriers. Because my aim is to show how partitioned space could positively impact women, I do not closely examine instances in which partitioned space impeded the privacy and autonomy of women, as in cases where women were raped in their homes due to a lack of impregnable barriers. While these cases are significant, previous scholars have already approached this topic, and thus my own interpretation merely serves as an expansion to this extant conversation.⁵¹

⁵¹ For more on the discourse surrounding rape in the *Genji*, see the following resources. Margaret Childs, “Coercive Courtship Strategies and Gendered Goals in Classical Japanese Literature” In *Japanese Language and Literature*, Vol. 44 (2). October 2010, 119. Norma Field, *The Splendor of Longing in the Tale of Genji* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). Shoji, Kaori and International Head Tribune, “Setouchi Jakuchō Takes Japan Back 1,000 Years” in *The New York Times*, January 23, 1999. Royall Tyler, “Marriage, Rank and Rape in *The Tale of Genji*.” *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 7, March 2002.

CHAPTER III: BODIES IN PARTITIONED SPACE

In order to discuss the relationship between women's bodies and their living environment, it is important to understand the status of the female body in the Heian period as well as the relationship between gender and space. To investigate this relationship, I will consider two interrelated values of Heian culture—purity and ethereality—to show how these concepts relate to the construction of spaces for women. The high death rate among both children and adults and uncontrollability of plagues contributed to themes of transcendentalism and a sensitivity to ephemera in Heian literature.⁵² In particular, the beautiful tragedy of the female body in the Heian imagination was associated not just with fertility, but more importantly fragility. Women had a short life expectancy because they were prone to an untimely death due to childbirth and contagious epidemics which ravaged the population on a frequent basis. A lethargic, pale, and child-like woman with floor-length thick hair and round eyebrows, swaddled underneath heavy layers of silk robes and cascading along the floor, was considered the standard of aristocratic beauty (Figure 13).

These aesthetic values resonate within the interior design of feminine residential space. The concentric layers of things and people that surrounded a noblewoman acted as barriers to pollutants from the exterior world. Here one's conceptual place within the social order once again intersects with his or her mobility within the courtly architectural

⁵² “In the second subperiod, from 700 to about 1050, the population suffered from repeated devastating epidemics of killer diseases including smallpox, measles, influenza, dysentery, and mumps. These important infections attacked a population that by and large had no immunities and killed great numbers of adults. The epidemics resulted in population loss, agricultural stagnation, a shortage of labor, revisions in laws dealing with land tenure, tax structure, and local government, a growing maldistribution of income, the rise of a transcendental religion (Buddhism) and millennialism, as well as a sensitivity to the evanescence of life in literature.” W. Wayne Farris, “Diseases of the Premodern Period in Japan” in *The History of Human Disease in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 384.

space. A visitor—a potential carrier of the pollutants—had varying depths of access according to his or her rank and relationship to the woman inside. Controlled access protected the core *moya* as a purified sanctuary that kept the resident in a perpetually safe condition, which both extended her longevity and reified her privileged status as an empress or other rarified female member of the aristocracy. The mechanism of partitions discussed above enabled a woman receiving her guest to be partially or fully invisible if she so desired, but nevertheless fully present. Her quiet voice, music, scent, and handwriting on letters passed through her layers of barriers asserted her mysterious yet invisible presence, intriguing those on the outside.⁵³ Her barriers could have been semi-transparent, permeable, and fluid which established a kind of liminal space where a woman could be both present and absent simultaneously. This liminality correlates with fantasies of the tragic feminine beauty. To varying degrees, a noblewoman could make herself seem fragile, sickly, saintly, intangible, and ephemeral through the utilization of partitioned space.

3.1 Pure and Defiled Spaces

Purity and defilement emerged as distinct values toward the end of the Asuka period (latter half of the 7th century), but the concept of “purity” (J. *myō*, C. *ming* 明) can

⁵³ In a conversation where he is advising the young Genji and Tō no Chūjō on the desirable and undesirable qualities of women, the Chief Equerry states: “As long as a girl has looks and youth enough, she avoids anything that might soil her name. Even when composing a letter, she takes her time to choose her words and writes in ink faint enough to leave you bemused and longing for something clearer; then, when at last you get near enough to catch her faint voice, she speaks under her breath, says next to nothing, and proves to be an expert at keeping herself hidden away.” Tyler, *Genji*, 25. Notably, this passage reveals what Murasaki Shikibu sees as a plausible male reaction to plausible feminine behavior. This suggests that Murasaki knows that women intentionally restrained themselves and controlled their self-exposure in order to portray themselves as more attractive and intriguing.

be traced back to China. As early as 300 BCE, the character *ming* signified a “set-apartness” from the mundane, or a “passive taboo” status reserved for sacred objects relating to death and royalty.⁵⁴ It was believed that physical contact with purity could restore a polluted body to health, just as pollution could contaminate a once-purified body or object. According to Herman Ooms:

This quality of “being apart,” providing social and political distance with an existential foundation, was staged, and in the process made tangible and proven real, through temporary active taboos in matters of doing 禁, speaking 諱, and eating 忌 (fasting, mourning) or permanent passive ones regarding something that had been constituted as sacred in essence, such as the ruler.⁵⁵

Within the agrarian structure of Japanese society, the “emperor” (*sumeramikoto* 天皇 or 皇尊) was understood to be not simply a political ruler but a sacred mediator between men and the heavens. An intriguing parallel can be made with the common perception of female bodies during the Heian period. Buddhism considers female bodies inherently polluted due to their menstrual blood, deeming women incapable of attaining awakening.⁵⁶ However, the stability of the imperial system at the core of the agrarian social structure depended on these defiled female bodies to produce royal heirs to the throne. This dilemma triggered a near paranoia for the vigilant purification of the bodies of noblewomen and the establishment of elaborate customs to shield them from further contamination.

In the Heian period, spiritual purity (sacredness) encompassed what we considered today to be a more epidemiological concept of hygienic purity (immunity).

⁵⁴ Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650-800*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008) 254.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 255.

⁵⁶ For more on the salvation of women in Buddhism, see Lori Meeks, "Buddhist Renunciation and the Female Life Cycle: Understanding Nunhood in Heian and Kamakura Japan." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 70, no. 1 (2010): 1-59.

Pollution of the body (*kegare* 汚れ) can refer to tangible contact with physical agents including blood, wounds, excrement, and corpses, and these contaminants were believed to cause both physical and mental illness.⁵⁷ Pollution can also refer to invisible and immaterial agents which could impact the mind and body. Yui Suzuki discusses how Heian laypeople carried anxieties about a variety of invisible spiritual forces that caused “grievances outside the laity’s immediate control,” arguing that, in the minds of Heian courtiers, invisible agents necessitated synaesthetic interventions.⁵⁸ These forces included vengeful spirits (*onryō* 怨霊), demons (*oni* 鬼), august spirits (*goryō* or *mitama* 御霊), local deities (*kami* 神), and malicious spirits (*mononoke* 物の怪). What distinguishes spirits from tangible forms of pollution is that spirits were understood as entities with agency and motive to possess the body of an individual. Suzuki focuses on *kaji* 加持, a Buddhist healing rite which priests performed to expel the spirit, to show how this apotropaic ritual served a kind of empowerment against the malicious workings of malicious spirits.⁵⁹ Entire spaces, ranging from a courtier’s home to the city of Heian-kyō as a whole, would be regularly cleansed through the *oharae* 御祓 purification ritual. The

⁵⁷ Benedetta Lomi, "Dharanis, Talismans, and Straw-Dolls: Ritual Choreographies and Healing Strategies of the "Rokujikyōhō" in Medieval Japan" in *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 41, no. 2 (2014): 255.

⁵⁸ “The fact that these spirits could not be seen heightened people’s anxieties about them. In the absence of visibility, other senses had to be used to facilitate their detection. It was possible for *mono-no-ke* to communicate to the living through dreams, where they appeared in human form. The more prevalent means of interaction, however, was for the *mono-no-ke* to possess a human body or object. Their presence was invisible to the eye but could be sensed, and they often produced a sensation described as a feeling of ‘eeriness.’ In the classic Heian novel *The Tale of Genji*, the protagonist Genji spends the night with his lover Yūgao in an isolated house and perceives something strangely disturbing and eerie. During the night he is terrified by “noises of invisible things walking and coming up behind him, though he could not see them.” Many other accounts describe the amorphous and ineffable quality of *mono-no-ke*; their invisibility gave them their power and rendered them especially frightening.” Yui Suzuki, “Possessions and the Possessed: The Multisensoriality of Spirits, Bodies, and Objects in Heian Japan” in *Sensational Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014) 70.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

same term also refers to exorcisms or purifications of the body as a receptacle or “space” which could be occupied by spirits.

It was believed that a person could experience symptoms immediately after contact with pollution, which required immediate quarantine. For instance, after his lover Yūgao is taken by a spirit and dies in his arms, Genji rushes back to his mansion, where he arrives “oblivious to his surroundings and barely conscious.”⁶⁰ Disoriented and feverish, he enters into quarantine in his curtained bed, where he lays suffering and “sick at heart” (*kokorobosoi* 心細い) with a fever and headache.⁶¹ Genji’s symptoms resemble what we understand today as post-traumatic shock, and he may have contracted the same spirit which infected Yūgao.⁶² The next day, he receives important visitors, but only allows them past his blinds into the center *moya* but not into the curtained bed. Genji insists that they remain standing outside the bed instead of sitting on the floor. If they were to touch the floor, they would defile themselves through increased physical contact with Genji’s material surroundings.⁶³ Genji was expected at court but was forced by the circumstances to stay in seclusion, as his defilement would threaten the sanctity of the Emperor.

Contact with death necessitated a period of abstinence and seclusion in the home for a standard thirty days.⁶⁴ This policy was applied to both the contaminated individual as well as their entire household. These practices included avoiding meat or alcohol, sitting in a dark, quiet space, and refraining from socialization to prevent further

⁶⁰ Tyler, *Genji*, 70.

⁶¹ *Kokorobosoi* is also translatable in English as helpless, forlorn, or lonely.

⁶² Genji’s fever persists into the next chapter, “Wakamurasaki.” He seeks spells and healing rituals from a mountain ascetic purported to have cured a fever epidemic during the previous summer.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶⁴ “Mourning confinement (*ōn-imi*) – a ritual seclusion, generally of thirty days, to avoid spreading the pollution due to contact with death.” Tyler, *Genji*, 1146.

defilement from spreading while starving out any lingering pollution. Even without physical contact with pollution, the death of a friend or loved one required a courtier and members of his or her household to wear prescribed shades of grey or black for set periods of time, often either three months or a full year, depending on the nature of their relationship. During an observance, the lattice shutters would remain closed, and the furnishings of the bedroom were replaced with grey or black curtains and screens (Figure 14). The inner *nurigome* could be used as a quiet and meditative retreat, or could be used to hold a body under observation after death, as the plastered walls were thought to be impermeable to spirits.⁶⁵ Unlike plain and undyed white fabric, dark fabric was dyed with color, visualizing the presence of defilement and suffering in the household. This also represents a loss of the exciting and ostentatious surroundings, which would be jubilant and therefore inappropriate during a period of mourning. Black furnishings and vestments signaled to the exterior world the presence of a resident in seclusion, allowing passersby to keep a safe distance and avoid further spread of contamination.

However, it was also a common practice for acquaintances to visit a household in mourning/sickness, and Genji received a great number of visitors during his sequestration. Nuns, too, donned grey clothing and furnishings as a component of their ritual seclusion, and often received guests after taking the tonsure. The *shukke* (“leaving the house”) or tonsure ceremony is often described as a bleak and emotional affair for both the renunciant and witnesses, as one was metaphorically leaving the world as if they were

⁶⁵ “People in the Heian period believed in the existence of *mononoke* such as “living spirits” (*ikiryō* 生霊) and “spirits of the dead” (*shiryō* 死霊). When suffering from illness or when post-partum weakness became worse, it was thought that *mononoke* had possessed the body, and in order to remove the spirit, an exorcism was performed. In order to escape *mononoke*, they hid themselves away in the secret *nurigome*. In the *Anthology of Tales from the Past* (*Konjaku monogatari* 今昔物語集), there are several mysterious stories relating to the *nurigome*.” Ōoka, *Nihon no kenchiku*, 114.

dying. Even in the sad or painful circumstances of illness, death, or renunciation, women wearing grey or black were often perceived as more beautiful and elegant, even when they visually appeared to have been desexualized through the shaving or cutting of their hair.⁶⁶ For instance, Genji's clandestine lover, the imperial consort Fujitsubo, takes the tonsure after the death of the emperor. When Genji visits Fujitsubo after her renunciation, now as "Her Cloistered Eminence," her new living quarters leaves a deep impression of both grief and beauty on him:

Genji divined her presence behind the blinds, caught a rustling of silks from the women waiting on her as they moved quietly about, and was touched, although not surprised, to gather from certain other sounds that their grief had not yet abated. Outside, the wild wind blew, but within her blinds the air was fragrant with her intense, "deep black" scent with a trace of her altar incense. Genji's own fragrance mingled so beautifully with both that one could think only of paradise.⁶⁷

The translator notes that the "deep black" scent referenced here is *kurobō* 黒方, a blend of six incenses used in the winter, which he is able to discern from the altar incense she is using to pray. Genji cannot see Fujitsubo, but the blinds cause him to perceive her as both a melancholic and beautifully transcendent presence who has symbolically traveled beyond the veil. The mingling of their perfumes suggests that the two will meet again in paradise. On a different occasion to visit Fujitsubo as a nun, after several occasions where they spoke in person, Genji remarks that her grey curtains and sleeves "evoked only

⁶⁶ Lori Meeks details the aesthetic transformation of noblewomen into nuns, describing it as a desexualization and defeminization of the body. "After taking the tonsure, men remained clearly identified as men while women who became *shukke* tended to adopt appearances that masked or downplayed their femininity. For women, then, the *shukke* represented, if not a full forfeiture of their female identity, the at least a move toward a less feminine, or perhaps asexual, identity." Meeks, 19.

⁶⁷ Tyler, *Genji*, 211.

greater depths of grace and beauty.”⁶⁸ Here is an occasion where a woman could be perceived as aesthetically beautiful or elegant, but not necessarily feminine or erotic.

The examples of households under quarantine, mourning, and seclusion found in the *Genji* makes it clear that during the Heian period, every noble person’s body was considered vulnerable to the effects of pollution, and drastic steps needed to be taken in order to achieve longevity of both body and soul. However, defilement was of particular concern to women because their bodies produced pollution in the form of menstrual blood. For this reason, although the typical counter-response to the presence of defilement was purification of the space/body, a solution to the pollution of the female body could have involved the displacement of the woman. When imperial consorts menstruated, or entered their third month of pregnancy, they were relocated to their family homes to preemptively avoid defiling the Emperor at the imperial palace. The smell and sight of menstrual or parturition blood attracted hungry ghosts who scavenged the earth for human remains.⁶⁹ As a woman progressed through her pregnancy and went into labor, she might be repeatedly attacked by spirits which caused her to vomit, wail in pain, and speak with a different voice. The spirit was viewed as an obstruction to labor,

⁶⁸ “In this new life of hers the borders of her blinds and the standing curtains around her were blue-gray, and through the gaps between them he glimpsed sleeves of gray or yellow [footnote: blue-gray (*aonibi*) was normal for a nun; other possibilities were gray (*usunibi*) or yellow (*kuchinashi*), worn here by gentlewomen who had taken vows with their mistress]: a prospect that for him evoked only greater depths of grace and beauty.” Ibid., 214.

⁶⁹ “In the midst of this otherwise auspicious scene is the reminder of what was supposed to remain unseen to the protagonists of this scroll: an emaciated hungry ghost, with its red hair standing on end, a distended stomach and a large tongue protruding from its open mouth, extending its bone-thin fingers and arms towards the infant and the pool of blood into which the baby has just descended. According to the Buddhist cosmology, such hungry ghosts inhabited one of the lower realms of beings. Doomed by their bad karma to scavenge for any scraps of food, human remains or even excrement, these ghosts were believed to wander endlessly in the human realm and gather at the moments of near-fatal or border-line liminal existence, expecting to prey on the just deceased or the newly born. It was believed that childbirth with its inevitable flow of parturition blood and afterbirth, or the sites of battle with many casualties and scattered body parts, would attract these lowly and fearsome malevolent spirits.” Anna Andreeva, “Childbirth in aristocratic households of Heian Japan” in *Dynamis* vol. 34 no. 2 (2014).

and priests and mediums were called to remove the offending spirit from the woman's body in order to deliver the child. If the birth was expected in advance, she might be attended to by groups of courtly ladies, who surrounded the woman while wailing and chanting prayers in solidarity to deter the encroaching spirits. Poppy seeds, oils, and incense were burned to fill the room with an olfactory sedative.⁷⁰ The strong and overpowering scent would have concealed the scent of blood in order to conceal the space from hungry ghosts. Monks chanted loudly and rubbed rosaries while courtiers twanged their bows strings to produce a cacophony of noise to irritate and repel the spirit out of the woman's body. As depicted in the *Scroll of Hungry Ghosts* (*Gaki zōshi* 餓鬼草子, late 12th century), the protective ring of attendants around the pregnant woman could be broken if one person became distracted. In the image, a man pops his head through the door and catches the attention of one of the gentlewomen encircling the pregnant woman, and her lapse of attention created a gap through which the ghost could enter (Figure 15).

During labor, the entire room would be furnished with white curtains and screens to create a ritual space to perform the exorcism, separating and defining the thresholds between pure and defiled zones (Figures 16 and 17).⁷¹ Similar to the black or grey curtains used during mourning, white curtains and costumes are a type of interior décor which is unintriguing in the sense that it has been drained of color, decorative details, and

⁷⁰ Andreeva suggests that the combustion of poppy seeds, which contain an opium alkaloid, may have had a sedative effect on those who inhaled the smoke. Poppy seeds and incense were burned during a variety of religious rites including birth and exorcism.

⁷¹ "Her bedding as well as interior furnishings such as curtains, hanging blinds, and screens were also prepared in white; these were used to contain Shōshi and the activity of childbirth. They were also employed to separate and define the spatial boundaries between the pure and the defiled. According to Karen Gerhart, in Japan the color white symbolized purification and was often worn to counteract the pollution caused by death. In the case of Shōshi's labor, childbirth was considered a kind of blood defilement, and the screens that sequestered Shōshi were means not only to provide privacy to the imperial consort but also to contain the defilement, preventing it from spreading and contaminating others. Meanwhile, the white robes both protected and purified Shōshi and her ladies-in-waiting." Suzuki, 75.

excitement. However, white was also believed to exude a purifying energy which could actively disrupt and dispel malignant energy. In her description of the birth of Prince Atsuhira in 1008, Murasaki details the spatial arrangements of Shōshi's birthing rites. Shōshi was completely enclosed by a set of curtains around her person at the northern side of the building, with a secondary set of curtains to the side for her gentlewomen. A large group of women were packed into the space between the panels and two daises behind them, as close as possible to Shōshi while still remaining separate. The women form a human barrier around Shōshi, similar to the gentlewomen in the *Scroll of Hungry Ghosts*. At the center of the room sit mediums enclosed in partitions who assume the privileged position typically occupied by a noblewoman, directing the ghost's attention towards the body of the *miko* instead of the noblewoman (Figure 18).⁷² The mass of people, sounds, and smells created a powerful presence that filled every square inch of the room, as if to overstimulate, irritate, and drive out the ghost which had taken up residence in the woman's body. The spirit was then purged out of the pregnant woman's body and into the body of the *miko* within whom it was captured and contained.⁷³

Considering this moment from the perspective of attendants to the rite behind the curtains, they might only hear the pregnant woman shouting at one moment, immediately followed

⁷² This is not indicated in the diagram of the scene (Figure 18), but Suzuki notes that the mediums depicted in *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* (*Eiga monogatari* 栄花物語) as enclosed in partitions. Additionally, the author of *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* wrote, "Each of the possessed mediums was put inside the enclosure of folding screens, where the attendant miracle workers shrieked incantations in unison." Ibid., 76.

⁷³ Both Yui Suzuki and Anna Andreeva published on this topic around the same time, so it is difficult to parse which scholar should be cited for which mutual idea. Andreeva acknowledged this coincidental timing in her paper because she had read a draft of Suzuki's chapter before publishing her own article. Suzuki's chapter focuses on the multisensoriality and synesthetic qualities of Heian religious rites, including exorcisms performed in conjunction with childbirth, from an art historical and religious studies perspective. Andreeva's article focuses on Heian childbirth, but includes discussion of the sights, sounds, and scents of childbirth from a medical/religious historical perspective, and it is her article which includes discussion of the *Scroll of Hungry Ghosts*.

by the *miko* in another room wailing incantations after she has received the spirit in her body. These sounds demonstrated to witnesses that the offending presence had been transferred between bodies.

The standard layout of an aristocratic residence also contributed to the cleansing of its interior space and the bodies of its residents. The concentric configuration of *shinden-zukuri* shares a similar architectural form with temples and shrines. In a Buddhist temple, the *moya* typically houses the central dais with the principle icon or icons, and the surrounding *hisashi* serves as a space for devotees to enter and circumambulate around the deity. A classic example of this architectural style in Shinto context is the Ise Shrine. The inner shrine (*naiku* 内宮) is a raised structure with a central *moya* surrounded by *hisashi* corridor. The shrine and its two subsidiary treasure houses are surrounded by four layers of fences (Figure 19).⁷⁴

Heian literature relays that the mirroring of the sacred/defiled dichotomy between devotional and residential architecture was also transposed onto the perception of bodies as sanctified or defiled micro “spaces” or containers which accumulated defilement. When Genji attempts to visit the Rokujō Lady during her residence on the premises of the Ise shrine, she refuses to meet him face-to-face because he has recently been in contact with death. Genji remarks that the Rokujō Lady was “keeping the sacred rope between them.”⁷⁵ Genji is referring to a *shimenawa* 注連縄, a sacred rope made of rice straw which could be drawn around a sacred object or space. The rope often includes *shide* 紙垂, zig-zag tassels which are attached to purification wands used to perform rituals. The *shime* of *shimenawa* means both “rope off” and “claim,” referring to the act of roping off

⁷⁴ Nishi Kazuo and Hozumi Kazuo, *What is Japanese Architecture?* (New York: Kodansha, 1996) 40-41.

⁷⁵ Tyler, 194.

and claiming a plot of land. *Shimenawa* can be placed around *yorishiro* 依代, objects such as trees or rocks which are capable of housing *kami* (deities). A person who is possessed by a *kami* becomes a *yorimashi* 憑座. *Shimenawa* ropes are often hung on portals such as *torii* gates, or between two posts, rocks, or trees to mark a threshold that reinforced the boundaries of sacred and profane space (Figure 20). The rope wards off evil spirits by declaring that the claimed vessel is sovereign and may only be entered by *kami*.⁷⁶ The tassels on *shimenawa* resemble the ribbons (*nosuji*) on curtains and blinds. In the *Genji*'s analogy, therefore, alludes to the double role of tassels as part of the decorative intrigue of standing curtains, and as a quasi-sanctified repellant placed on a threshold to deter the entrance of contaminating agents (Figure 21).⁷⁷

The direct analogy between one's living space and one's own body in the mentality of the Heian courtiers also dictated the movement of that body through space. The idea that female bodies were fundamentally defiled, but male counterparts were not, translated to the practice of segregation of men and women (or rather men away from women) in temple spaces through the prohibition of women's entrance into sacred areas *nyonin kekkai* 女人結界.⁷⁸ Women were prohibited because it was believed that their

⁷⁶ See John Nelson, "Land Calming and Claiming Rituals in Contemporary Japan" for more on Shinto rituals regarding the marking of sacred space.

⁷⁷ Akazawa considers the tassels on *shimenawa* and the decorative elements of costume and interior textiles to be similarly performative in nature. "In the classical and medieval periods, furniture and other furnishings lent meaning and function to the spaces in which they were installed, with *uchi'ide* in particular coming into existence as an apparatus used to denote female seating areas in ceremonial spaces. This placement or display of women's clothing implied the otherwise invisible separation of the women's domain from other spaces within the estate. Much like how the use of Shinto *shimenawa* straw festoons or *gohei* 御幣 wands and other religious accoutrements made manifest the existence of the deities, this visualization of gender domain demarcation was achieved through a method of performative authority." Akazawa, 50.

⁷⁸ In addition to prohibitions against women entering the complex, entrance to the inner sanctuary was typically prohibited to lay devotees (at Buddhist temples) or non-priests (at Shinto shrines) except on special occasions. See Bernard Faure, *The Power of Denial* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) for more on the restriction of men and women from sacred spaces.

bodies (specifically menstrual blood) would contaminate the area and defile the monks in residence. At Mt. Koya, for example, the *kekkaï* (or literally “bound space”) includes the inner sanctum of the temple and radiates outward to include the surrounding area or mountain.⁷⁹ If a woman transgressed the invisible *kekkaï* threshold on the mountain, legend held that she would instantly be transformed into a rock or tree. Her petrified body was said to remain in place as the marker of the boundary between the sacred and profane.⁸⁰ Bernard Faure argues that *nyonin kekkaï* denied women agency and access to spiritual resources, considering the gendered nature of Buddhist sacred spaces as a complex reflection of misogyny that underlines its teaching.⁸¹ The justification given for *nyonin kekkaï* at the time demonstrates an understanding of sanctity which connects the human body, sex/gender, purity/defilement, and physical space.

One occasion for a Heian noblewoman to leave her house was to visit a temple on a pilgrimage retreat, such as Kiyomizudera (清水寺, founded 778).⁸² Men and women prepared for pilgrimages by observing a cleansing abstinence (*sōjin* or *shōjin* 精進) before departure. They fasted, burned incense, and prayed using rosary beads in order to more efficaciously receive the effects of the pilgrimage. Pilgrims could travel to their destination on foot or by palanquin. As noblewomen seldom had to walk anywhere, let

⁷⁹ Mt. Kōya, a mountain designated as sacred in 819 by Kūkai, had six concentric zones of increasingly pure *kekkaï* which extended from the peak approximately 3.5 km in radius, and all women were banned from climbing or circumambulating the mountain. Ibid., 277.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 277-287.

⁸¹ “The sacred space of the *kekkaï* remains an arena of contention, claimed by different interpretations. The feminist denunciation of the *nyonin kekkaï* as proof of Buddhist misogyny is irrefutable. The importance of the gender code does not, however, rule out other, perhaps less obvious, interpretations. The relations between Buddhism and women are not simply determined by gender, but also by various cultural, social, and political conditions, and in particular by the relations between Buddhism and local cults.” Ibid., 297.

⁸² Pilgrimage to Buddhist temples which housed the deity Kannon, such as Kiyomizudera, were popular among women during the Heian period because of their purported miracle efficaciousness. For more on specific pilgrimage destinations for women, see Barbara Ambros, “Liminal Journeys: Pilgrimages of Noblewomen in Mid-Heian Japan” in *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 24, no. 3/4 (1997): 301-45.

alone the many miles to the temple, the effort of walking on foot was considered to be more pious. Noblewomen wore traveling garments (*tsubosōzoku* or *tsuboshōzoku* 壺装束) when visiting a temple and while listening to sermons. The *tsubosōzoku* outfit included a wide-brimmed veiled hat (*ichimegasa* 市女笠) and a red sash (*kakeobi* 掛帯) which marked the wearer as taboo (Figure 22). Barbara Ambros sees the *tsubosōzoku* as a status symbol: the quality, cut, and styling of the pilgrim's outfit, including the presence of a *kakeobi* sash, could distinguish upper-class noblewomen from lower-class women, all of whom crossed paths during a pilgrimage.⁸³ Thus, while a veil signifies a taboo status which should be avoided in one sense, it also draws intrigue towards the identity of its wearer, giving the impression that the concealed person is of high status.

Once pilgrims arrived at the temple, monks would set up private enclosures (*tsubone* 局) for the guests using blinds, folding screens, and mats. The enclosure allowed pilgrims to stay in retreat overnight at the temple as part of their visit, and the proximity of one's enclosure to the deity signified her status.⁸⁴ Screens were placed around a worshipper near the altar during their intimate obeisance towards the deity.⁸⁵ When describing a visit to Kiyomizudera, Sei Shōnagon recounts how noisy the temple was from inside her enclosure in the women's quarters, and how young men might feign interest in visiting the deity but would then gather near the women's quarters trying to get

⁸³ "The robes clearly functioned to hide the lady from stranger's eyes, but they were also a status symbol. When Sei Shōnagon met a woman of low status on her pilgrimage to the Inari shrine, she found it necessary to point out that the woman was not wearing traveling robes but had just tucked up her *kimono*. This means that the woman was not wearing an *ichimegasa* or a *kakeobi*. Another indication that the *kakeobi* may have functioned as a status symbol is that in the *Ishiyama-dera engi* lower-class women are often depicted without a *kakeobi*, whereas noblewomen are depicted with it." Ibid., 314.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 319.

⁸⁵ "They have set up a temporary enclosure of standing screens, and seem to be performing a few perfunctory obeisances to the altar." McKinney, 123.

a peek inside.⁸⁶ Meanwhile, gentlewomen could try to catch a glimpse of the main image as she traveled back and forth from their enclosures. Peeping and eavesdropping formed an integral part of the pilgrim's experience at the temple, alongside the decrease in comfort and privacy experienced from within their enclosures.⁸⁷

For noblewomen, the completion of a pilgrimage symbolized the near opposite experience of everyday life. Leaving the protected sanctuary of her living quarters, she cleansed and displaced her body so as to perform obeisance before the deity residing within the temple in the hopes of receiving spiritual benefice. Pilgrimage is an extended performance of deference: the pilgrim acknowledges her own profane status, goes on a long and physically arduous journey, then engages with the deity in some manner in order to pray for the alleviation of her suffering. Part of her experience of communion is the auditory and olfactory sensations emanating from and around the deified presence in which the pilgrim immersed herself during her visit, along with any faint glimpses she may have caught of the main image. In the premodern context, a pilgrimage was conceived of as a symbolic enactment of death and rebirth due to the arduous nature of its journey. After she has completed her journey to the temple, a woman would have returned to her own sanctuary as a changed individual. But the sanctified condition of her

⁸⁶ "The young men will tend to hang about near the ladies' quarters, and not so much as glance in the direction of the sacred image." Ibid.

⁸⁷ "If she was fortunate, the pilgrim could see the image in the main hall on the way to her enclosure and witness the priests bringing lamp offerings (*miakashi* 御灯明) to be burnt before the image of worship. A barrier (*inufusegi* 犬防, dog barrier) kept anyone but the priests from approaching the main image too closely, but it allowed a glimpse of the main image. The priests of the temple would enter the sanctuary, kneel on the platform of worship, and recite petitions and sutras in the pilgrim's stead. Even when she was in her enclosure the pilgrim could hear petitions and sutras being recited. Hearing the sound of temple bells ringing and conches being blown was also part of a proper retreat. The pilgrims were also aware of what went on in the other enclosures around them because the curtains and blinds did not prevent sound from traveling. But in general, direct contact with other pilgrims was limited and often unwanted. Sei Shōnagon even complained about having to pass by pilgrims (perhaps they were lower-class pilgrims) lined up in front of her enclosure." Ambros, 321.

body was precarious and still under constant danger of exposure. As she resumed her everyday life that was mostly spent conversing with family, members of her household, and other visitors, it was necessary for a noblewoman to maintain and prolong the delicate condition of her newly gained purity by continuing to distance herself from exterior polluting forces.

Partitions were utilized throughout a pilgrim's journey to enable safe passage there and back, which maximized the impact of her encounter with the divine. En route, her palanquin or traveling garments functioned like an incubator which protected her empty (fasted and purified) body from absorbing the pollutants of the exterior world. It is true that this type of veiling shielded her body from the gaze of others on the road, as a noblewoman and her retinue expected to pass by men and commoners, but clearly these highly decorative and ostentatious methods of veiling were employed to attract attention towards her revered and taboo status as a noblewoman. Once at the temple, her semipermeable enclosure allowed her body to come into contact with the sacred energy of the temple, while the partitions themselves continued to both attract and divert attention from the other pilgrims. In other words, the partitions encasing the pilgrim's body had two functions: to iterate to passersby that she was a noblewoman, which required that they keep a respectful distance, but also to enhance her sensorium and thereby more fully immerse the noblewoman within the sacred and healing environs of the temple.

3.2 Impressions and Revelations of the Body

Discourse surrounding aristocratic courtship customs, partitions, and vision has formed a significant thread of scholarship on the Heian period, and especially so with regard to the *Genji*. The role that architecture and partitions play in mediating romantic contact between men and women is a focal point of literary scholar Doris Bargaen's book *Mapping Courtship and Kinship in Classical Japan*.⁸⁸ Bargaen strongly opposes the view that sequestration of women was a form of male-imposed imprisonment, listing *The Pillow Book* as a prime example that "puts to rest any notions that women were immobilized victims of a carceral environment."⁸⁹ The physical boundaries of *shinden-zukuri* space, as well as courtiers' movements through space, are part of how she conceptualizes her study as a "mapping" of courtship.⁹⁰ She focuses on the *kōkyū* 後宮 (the "rear palace" for courtly women, located to the north of or "behind" the Emperor's living quarters) as an opportunistic arena (as compared to their natal residences) where women could seek social advancement, whether through romantic relationships with men, or by garnering a reputation for herself through cultural engagement with fellow women.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Doris Bargaen, *Mapping Courtship and Kinship in Classical Japan: The Tale of Genji and its Predecessors* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).

⁸⁹ Bargaen, 27.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹¹ "The institution of the *kōkyū*, a principal site for courtship among the upper echelons of Heian society, requires close scrutiny... That the emperor wanted the choicest women to be near and as exclusively his as possible can be regarded as an imperial prerogative, an expression of his power and authority. The emperor, however, was not the only person to exploit the possibilities of the *kōkyū*... Residence in the *kōkyū*, where they basked in the emperor's reflected glory, was also desirable from the point of view of highly accomplished women. It was considered a great privilege to dwell in the *kōkyū* as a member of the emperor's entourage. In addition to the simple pleasures of female sociability, the probability that a woman might be courted by a man of high rank—or even form a relationship with the emperor himself—was an obvious advantage of residence in the *kōkyū*. Less obvious to those of us who live in what sometimes seems

Bargen also compares Heian sequestration practices to that of Ottoman Turkey and Mughal India, emphasizing that Heian women had the freedom to move about the palace, as well as to leave the grounds, which further challenges the oppressive image of the imperial harem.⁹² She quotes Sei Shōnagon, who held strong opinions about the men who criticized the palace serving women as “frivolous and unseemly” for walking openly around court instead of hiding meekly behind fans and screens, which would have been a ridiculous prospect for busy and important gentlewomen.⁹³ For Bargen, Sei’s critique represents a “desire for equal rights of self-expression,” and the serving women’s behavior at court represented an open display of the desire to see and be seen.⁹⁴ Contrary to the conventional image in which women are stashed away behind curtains by men, Bargen suggests that women had a higher degree of agency in court because they were able to utilize their architectural setting to self-select their degree of visibility and modesty. As Bargen argues, the advantage of the imperial harem for gentlewomen was that they could express themselves and engage in sexual relationships at will by controlling their visibility.

like an aggressively unpoetic age is the advantage gained by membership in a highly literary culture.” Ibid., 20.

⁹² Bargen notes parallels between Heian taboos and Islamic conceptions of *harīm*, identified by scholar Leslie Peirce as “to be forbidden or unlawful, and to declare sacred, inviolable, or taboo.” Here, she notes scholar Ruby Lal’s observation that Akbar’s sequestered women “were made sacred by their ‘invisibility’ and their association with Muhammed’s realm. Ibid., 25.

⁹³ “I can’t bear men who consider women who serve at court to be frivolous and unseemly. Though mind you, one can see why they would. From His Majesty the Emperor, whose name can barely be spoken for reverence, to the court nobles and senior courtiers, not to mention people of the fourth and fifth rank of course, there would be very few men who don’t catch sight of us at some point. And have you ever heard tell of a lady who served at court shyly hiding herself from her own servants or others who came from her house, let alone palace maids, latrine cleaners, and general dolts and nobodies? A gentleman wouldn’t come across as many people as we gentlewomen do – though probably they do while they’re at court, it’s true.” McKinney, 22.

⁹⁴ “Sequestering within the confines of the palace was enough, paradoxically, to allow not only women’s greater visibility than elsewhere but their liberty—along with men’s—to look at everyone, from the emperor down. Edith Sarra has commented insightfully on this “radical” section portraying “the imperial palace as a kind of house of mirrors where neither gender nor any particular class monopolizes the pleasures and risks of seeing and being seen. In other words, Sei Shōnagon’s critique of men’s critique expresses her desire for equal rights of self-expression.” Bargen, 29.

Of particular importance to Bergen's mapping of courtship and genealogy in the *Genji* is the device of *kaimami* 垣間見 ("looking through a gap in a fence"), which she refers to as the "uniquely Japanese form of erotic hide-and-seek."⁹⁵ Bergen describes *kaimami* as a narrative process similar to what Mieke Bal calls "focalization," or the construction of a discrepancy in reality between perception/perceiver/perceived. For Bergen, focalization occurs when Murasaki Shikibu shifts between the male character's perspective and the female narrator's perspective, creating a gendered, subjective, and ambiguous gaze which enables the feminine voice to critique the male's perception of reality.⁹⁶ The male viewer does not clearly or accurately see the woman in reality, and instead sees an oblique impression or "shadow woman" onto whom he projects his reproductive impulses.⁹⁷ Bergen's interpretation of vision relates to aspects of Lacanian theories of scopophilia, treating the eye as a sort of phallus that pierces through the hole in a fence as orificial extensions of a woman's body. However, here Bergen once again challenges the prevailing interpretation of *kaimami* solely as male violation of a helpless female body. Being spied upon might constitute an objectification of the body equitable to "visual rape" if the woman was unaware and therefore devoid of agency, but Bergen

⁹⁵ "The principal means by which courtship is conducted and the principal trope it takes in the *Genji* is the uniquely Japanese form of erotic hide-and-seek known to Murasaki Shikibu and her contemporaries as *kaimami* (lit., "looking through a gap in the fence"). In its simplest form, *kaimami* occurs whenever someone (usually a man) observes someone else (usually a woman) through some material obstruction (fence, hedge, wall, shutter, curtain, screen, fan, or kimono sleeve)." Ibid., 2.

⁹⁶ "In the paradigmatic form of *kaimami*, a male character secretly observes a female character. In a first-person narrative, what the character sees may or may not be "reality." When an author chooses to tell his or her story through a fictional narrator, however, visual perception is further complicated by refraction through the narrator's lens. This added narrative dimension underlines the subjective nature and the ambiguity of visual perceptions. What the male character sees or thinks he sees may not necessarily be what the narrator thinks the man sees. In other words, in scenes of *kaimami* the observed female character is perceived through the male character who sees her and also through the narrative voice that articulates his vision." Bergen, 57.

⁹⁷ "*Kaimami* serves not only to satisfy the observer's curiosity. It inspires him to express love and satisfy desire through words (poetry) and physical acts. Such a sequence, triggered by mere looking, is ultimately motivated by the primal instinct for reproduction." Ibid., 62.

argues that *kaimami* could be perceived as an “erotic thrill” for other women who were aware and accepting of the gaze.⁹⁸

Bargen’s observation that women were empowered by means of the partitioned environment in the *kōkyū* is compelling. If we take *kaimami* just as “peeping,” then one may mistake the act to always be unidirectional, and taken in isolation, it is possible to conceive of this type of vision as a penetrative sex act. Bargen asserts that a woman’s awareness and control of this penetrative gaze is equated with consensual sex because she can use partitions to select the degree of visibility of her body, further supporting the idea that the *kōkyū* was an empowering environment. It is the element of self-awareness and agency which I find to be the most intriguing component of her analysis, as well as the idea that the man perceives an imaginary and idealized woman rather than her “real” self.

However, I believe her discussion of *kaimami* and the “shadow woman” can be expanded as a model for understanding the use of partitions in contexts outside of courtship.⁹⁹ While at times Bargen makes it abundantly clear that *kaimami* is a literary device employed by Murasaki Shikibu, at other times she seems to conflate the doubly-refracted narrative topos that is *kaimami* with actual sensory perception (any kind of seeing or listening) which occurred through partitions.¹⁰⁰ Focusing exclusively on the male gaze and *kaimami* has the potential to askew our understanding of how and why

⁹⁸ “That visual penetration is a “win” for the man does not mean that it is a loss for the woman. Courtship is not a zero-sum game. While some noblewomen may have experienced *kaimami* as “visual rape,” bolder women, of whom Sei Shōnagon is the most notable example, may have felt an erotic thrill that sent shivers down their spines.” Ibid., 60.

⁹⁹ “The observer sees a woman through a gap but sometimes perceives her as someone else. Like the *mono no ke* in the drama of spirit possession, this someone else, whom I call the “shadow woman,” is a figment of the observer’s imagination. The shadow woman is produced by a deep drive, the sexual desire to lose oneself in another person, anticipating the consummation of love.” Ibid., 62.]

¹⁰⁰ Bargen notes that the importance of *kaimami* in the actual lives of Heian aristocrats may be hard to assess, but that instances in diaries are frequent enough to warrant a belief that it was a widespread phenomenon. Ibid., 53.

actual partitions were used as a part of daily life. When we shift the focus away from courtship, it is clear that concerns over unmediated visibility of the body were shared by both men and women, as well as by people of different ages, ranks, and marital status. For example, Genji sometimes chooses to speak to other men through a curtain when he is not presentable enough for direct, face-to-face (*manoatari* 目の当たり) conversation.¹⁰¹ The practice of speaking through partitions is sometimes referred to as *monogoshi* 物越, meaning a meeting “across something,” the something being a partition.¹⁰² The term *monogoshi* focuses on the partitions that separate the two parties, rather than on the gaze directed from one to the other as in *kaimami*. This subtle shift of focus gives the former term the connotation of an intimate but more bilateral conversation. Borgen does not take the idea of *monogoshi* into consideration. She seems to see all partitions as opportunities for a *kaimami* scenario and describes partitions as the “*kaimami*-related architectural features” of *shinden-zukuri*.¹⁰³ *Monogoshi* nevertheless is an interaction through partitions. What this means is, with a full acknowledgement of the significance of Borgen’s points, we must decouple partitions from the male gaze to fully grasp the functions they served within the Heian courtly lives.

¹⁰¹ “He [Genji] amused himself chatting with such particularly worthwhile young gentle-women as Chūnagon and Nakatsukasa, who were delighted to see him, loosely clothed as he was in the heat. His Excellency then appeared and talked with his son-in-law through a standing curtain, since Genji was not presentable, while Genji reclined on an armrest, making wry faces and muttering, “Isn’t it hot enough for him?” “Hush!” he added when the women laughed. He was the picture of carefree ease.” Tyler, 35.

¹⁰² Doris Croissant separates *monogoshi* and *kaimami* as two different pictorializing techniques employed the illustrated handscrolls to depict gendered and erotic communication. Doris Croissant, “Visions of the Third Princess. Gendering Spaces in “The Tale of Genji” Illustrations” in *Arts Asiatiques* 60 (2005): 103.

¹⁰³ “It must be immediately pointed out, however, that barriers and shields, despite their different connotations and functions, refer to the same physical objects. The precise meaning and emotional impact of the generic fence thus depends on gendered perspectives. Moreover, the *kaimami*-related architectural features of the Heian *shinden* have reversible qualities. Not only do the walls of the *shinden* function as either barriers or shields; each can have a dual purpose.” Borgen, 39.

The presence and overall functionality of partitions in *shinden-zukuri* may be more fruitfully explored by following another conceptual seed planted by Borgen. She alludes to the idea that a woman's fetishistic aura (the "oblique impression" or "shadow woman" with whom the spectator desires physical contact) is the product of a broader phenomenological effect created by this environment that can become eroticized in certain contexts. One intriguing proposition that Borgen mentions in passing is the contrast between Heian noblewomen and *hibutsu* or "hidden Buddhas." Borgen states:

In this, then, the sequestered Heian noblewoman is different from the *hibutsu* (hidden Buddhas). Buddhist doctrine requires the extinction of all desires in order to release humans from suffering and allow them to attain enlightenment. Not only did the woman represent the desire that impeded the man's enlightenment, she herself was corrupted by it and thus emphatically excluded from enlightenment—but not from courtship, marriage, and the pain (and pleasure) of carnal existence.¹⁰⁴

According to this statement, Borgen seems to disregard any similarities between the circumstances of sequestering Heian noblewomen from male gaze and the hiding of especially efficacious Buddhist images from devotees' gaze, based on her interpretation of the penetrative gaze. Instead, I would contend that similar aesthetic strategies are at work in both women's interior space and that of the space around concealed Buddhist icons.

The term *hibutsu* 秘仏 or hidden Buddhas refers to icons which are hidden from public view, often inside a wooden shrine within a temple hall. Some are never revealed to the public, while others are revealed through ritualized "opening the curtain" (*kaichō* 開帳) ceremonies on special occasions. Sometimes, a stand-in copy of the icon (*maedachibutsu* 前立仏) is used as an avatar for worship while the main icon remains

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 60.

hidden. Fabio Rambelli has shown how the act of concealing a Buddha icon de-visualizes the material body to enhance its immaterial power as a sacred entity, and this power is further enhanced by periodic and controlled access to its material form.¹⁰⁵ Even when the statue is made visible during a *kaichō* ceremony, worshippers are often kept at a distance in the dark and crowded temple hall, and a mere flicker of the icon (or its copy) by candlelight serves as “proof of presence.” Worshipers can also sense the Buddha’s presence through the scent of fragrant wood emanating from the body, or the sounds made by visitors and monks gathered in worship around the icon who chant and rub prayer beads or amulets. This strategy of emphasizing presence through obfuscation is comparable to the way that other senses become heightened when sight is obstructed, either by darkness or by physical blockages such as a curtain, triggering sensations of beauty, power, curiosity, and fear all at the same time (something which Sei Shōnagon might describe as “elegantly intriguing”). Hiding the body allows for the spectator to “see” with imaginary vision while still communicating with the curtained subject, as the mind fills in the lack of visual information using the other available sensations, allowing the subject to project a more powerful and psychologically impactful presence.

The sacred aura of the image is reinforced by the concentric configuration of the temple, in which one moves inward from the most polluted to the most pure.¹⁰⁶ Rambelli cites the example of the Thousand-arm Kannon, the “Goddess of Mercy” at

¹⁰⁵ “The secrecy of *hibutsu* is never complete, but is employed to increase the sense of presence and effectiveness of the secret buddha, something that direct visibility may be less effective in achieving. Hiddenness enhances rather than diminishes the sacredness of *hibutsu*; at the same time, their sacredness is not decreased by periodic display. Public displays (*kaichō* or museum exhibitions), pictures, and “copies” all serve to reinforce a sense of the numinous presence of the buddha residing in the statue.” Fabio Rambelli, “Secret Buddhas: The Limits of Buddhist Representation.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 57, no. 3 (2002): 295.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 293.

Kiyomizudera, which is displayed only once every thirty-three years.¹⁰⁷ The Kannon is placed inside a closed shrine, flanked by two attendant deities who are also *hibutsu*, surrounded again by a series of twenty-eight deities that protect the central triptych. The altar is placed in the darkest and deepest space of the main hall, and the deities look outwards towards the open veranda. Rambelli argues that the affective qualities of *hibutsu* create an “aura as living entities” which allows the material body of the Buddha to symbolically transcend its earthly limitations as a wooden vessel. He notes that sexualized thoughts or behaviors triggered by a deity can endow the icon with a sense of formidable power held over the worshiper. But because the Buddha is safely hidden inside a wooden shrine with no possibility for a devotee to steal a glance, in this case, it is the Buddha’s body and presence which penetrates the sensorium of the devotee, a reversal of the paradigmatic subject-object relationship in *kaimami*.¹⁰⁸

According to Rambelli, Buddhist icons are fundamentally paradoxical objects, as they are the material manifestation of an intangible, unthinkable deity within the profane space of the human realm.¹⁰⁹ The paradoxical existence of Buddhist icons resonates with

¹⁰⁷ Kannon (J. 観音, Sk. Avalokiteśvara) is a bodhisattva (an enlightened being who postpones their assumption to Buddhahood) who was known to alleviate the suffering of worshipers in this life so as to prepare them to be saved by the Amida Buddha, or the “Buddha of Infinite Light” (J. 阿弥陀仏, Sk. Amitābha) in their next life. Kannon is associated with the Lotus Sutra, one of the most popular and influential doctrines of Mahayana Buddhism. This sutra teaches that women can achieve enlightenment, and it was memorized and copied by women in order to accrue spiritual merit. Because Kannon was of particular aid to those who were otherwise excluded from enlightenment, Kannon is portrayed as feminine and is associated with compassion, motherhood, and mercy.

¹⁰⁸ “Nudity and sexuality, elements that in one sense may desecrate the icon and provoke heterodoxical or heretical thoughts or behaviors in the viewers, also confer upon it great sacredness, a higher spiritual power that must be contained and controlled; this is in fact one of the fundamental tenets of esoteric Buddhism, and one of the main features of secret buddhas.” Ibid., 294.

¹⁰⁹ “A sort of polar dynamic, a dialectic between spirit and matter, sacred and profane, is thus at work in an interaction with a buddha image. Buddha images are related in this sense to the central features of fetishism as described by Marc Augé: endowed with the real presence of an actual being, which is irreducible to its appearance, they manifest the residue of the unthought/unthinkable. Here we see the ambiguity of something that is sacred, unconditioned, absolute, but also at the same time “made,” conditioned, profane—real buddhas and inanimate objects.” Ibid., 284.

the paradox of the Heian noblewoman's body, whose youth, beauty, and prestige as the potential receptacle for the most precious imperial heir gave it tremendous presence and authority, but was fundamentally corrupted, and most easily tainted by further corruption. Yet as with *hibutsu*, where the intervention of the shrine allowed the devotees to suspend their commonsensical awareness of the statue's mundane materiality to focus solely on its spiritual essence, the veiling of a woman's physical body contributes to a noblewoman exuding her beauty, elegance, and power.

During a partitioned exchange, filling in for the lack of visual information, scent and sound served as indicators of the disembodied presence of the person on the other side, and this enhanced the impact of the ensconced person's effect on the visitor. Heian women are often described as speaking in quiet voices, presumably choosing to speak quietly while also being dampened by the layers of partitions surrounding her. Scent is an important component of the affective presentation of Buddhist icons, exposed or hidden, and the closeness of the worshipper's body to the fragrant wood of the statue or incense burning in the temple hall indicates a kind of privileged physical intimacy with the deity.¹¹⁰ Similarly, it was not necessary for a woman to be seen by her visitor at all, even through a gap, because her sound and scent were satisfactory indicators of her noble presence. Genji himself, the shining and beautiful son of the divine Emperor who behaves compassionately like a Buddha, is famous within the world of the story for his "deliciously perfumed" robes and his graceful touch on the flute or stringed instruments. These saintly emanations serve as proof of his divine presence when he sits on the

¹¹⁰ When Sei visited Kiyomizudera, monks provided star anise (which smell similar to licorice) for worshipers to enhance the effect of their communion with the deity. "As you perform your obeisance before the image, the worshipper's sash draped over your shoulder, a monk approaches with a few words and presents a sprig of star anise leaves, and the scent of it fills you with reverence and delight." McKinney, 121.

veranda of a lady's home, even though she may not be able to see him. On the reverse end, less-attractive qualities could also be mitigated by a screen. For example, one of Genji's companions describes meeting a woman who refused to meet him face-to-face, claiming that her breath reeked of garlic.¹¹¹

Many women in the *Genji* are portrayed as having a sense of magnetic energy and psychological power over Genji and others, similar to the way that men and women are attracted to the ineffable presence of Genji. The trope of *kaimami* is explicitly associated with vision, but often a suitor's approach is paired with other clues that indicate proof of presence: the scent of her incense wafting out of her apartment, or the sound of rustling silks, voices, or music are often perceived before the suitor achieves direct visual contact. After a famous scene in which Onna San no Miya (the Third Princess, Genji's wife) is briefly exposed to the gaze of the young man Kashiwagi, the kitten that opened her blinds ran out to Kashiwagi in the yard (Figure 23). He picks up the kitten and noticed that it smelled like Onna San no Miya's perfume, igniting his desire a second time and in a more forceful way, as the kitten's scent, fur, and mews offer Kashiwagi and opportunity to smell, touch, and hear the avatar of his attraction.¹¹² This triggers such a powerful impulse in Kashiwagi that he eventually loses control and rapes Onna San no Miya. Once Genji finds out, Kashiwagi grows sick with shame and guilt until he dies.

The case of the Third Princess was an accidental exposure, not a coordinated moment of revelation like *kaichō* which might occur as a component of ritual courtship.

¹¹¹ "Having lately been prostrate with a most vexing indisposition, I have for medicinal purposes been ingesting *Allium sativum*, and my breath, I fear, is too noxious to allow me to entertain you in my normal fashion. However, while I cannot address you face-to-face, I hope that you will communicate to me any services you may wish me to perform on your behalf." Tyler, 34.

¹¹² "To relieve his powerful feelings the Intendant [Kashiwagi] called the cat and cuddled it, and with its delicious smell and its dear little mew it felt to him naughtily enough like its mistress herself." Tyler, 620.

However, this scene clearly relays the intensity of the split second when a high-ranking noblewoman dramatically captured the attention of someone within the premises of her living quarters. In the moments after he witnessed Onna San no Miya, Kashiwagi reinforced his fleeting visual impression of her form by touching and smelling the cat. After the shrine doors have closed following a *kaichō*, a devotee might find themselves wanting to hold on to his or her memory of the Buddha, whose form has implanted himself into their mind while remaining intangible, ephemeral, and devastatingly out of reach. As Rambelli recalls of his visit to see a *hibutsu* at the Shin Yakushiji temple 新薬師寺 in Nara, after paying a small fee, a monk provided him with an amulet to hold during the *kaichō* ceremony.¹¹³ By touching the amulet during and after the *kaichō* ceremony, it is possible for the devotee to recall and intensify their memory of the glimpsed deity by combining their memory with other sensory experiences; in this case, the same feeling of the amulet in his hand which he felt in the moment he witnessed the deity. Similarly, with noblewomen, allowing herself to be exposed for a brief moment, then retreating to invisibility while continuing to contact visitors through her voice, letters, or perfume, would have intensified her magical presence.

There are instances when a noblewoman (or a gentlewoman acting on her lady's behalf) could more proactively amplify and extend her presence beyond partitions while remaining unseen, in a comparable way to how touch relics may function within the context of devotional concealment as an extension of the statue's presence. Yūgao, a gentlewoman in service to a woman on a property that Genji had been scoping out, sent

¹¹³ The *hibutsu* at Shin Yakushiji is the Otama Jizō, a Bodhisattva holding a sphere which represents his genitals. The amulet in the worshipper's hand echoes the object held by the Jizō, allowing the worshipper to indirectly "touch" and mirror the statue through its avatar. Rambelli, 273.

him a fan which was adorned with a poem and “deeply impregnated with the scent favored by its owner.” Genji works out that he must have been spied by a servicewoman, but “he rather liked the way she accosted him” and gives into his youthful and impulsive nature by responding to her gesture.¹¹⁴ To make contact with Genji and capture his attention in this manner serves as means for Yūgao to initiate a relationship while remaining in an invisible position of power and mystique. This resembles the erotic nature of *kaimami*, except in a reversal of the paradigmatic form identified by Bergen: it is the unseen Yūgao who observes and initiates contact with Genji.

The idea that partitions, sound, and scent comprise the beautiful “image” or impression of a noblewoman in her living quarters is the major conceit of Genji’s pursuit of the Hitachi Princess, Suetsumuhana. She is of high rank, but exceptionally reticent and withdrawn from the world, and without sufficient financial support her house has fallen into ruin. Her gentlewoman Taifu hatches a plan with Genji, who hides behind a fence to hear Suetsumuhana practicing her zither in the moonlight. Genji returns a second time, and on this occasion, he’s allowed into the *hisashi* corridor to attempt conversation with the lady through her blinds and curtains, though she is too fearful to speak out loud. He is now close enough to smell her incense, which convinces him that the lady is worth her high rank, and, by extension, a lady worth his attention.¹¹⁵ On a third visit, he peeps inside through her lattice shutters at night and begins to realize the “pathetic condition” of

¹¹⁴ “I see, Genji thought, it must be the young woman in service. She certainly gave me that poem of hers as though she knew her way about! She cannot be anyone in particular, though. Still, he rather liked the way she had accosted him, and he had no wish to miss this chance, since in such matters it was clearly his way to be impulsive.” Ibid., 57-58.

¹¹⁵ “Genji assumed from Her Highness’s rank that she would flaunt no modish charms but instead exhibit a supremely distinguished manner; and once she had moved a little closer, at Taifu’s insistence, the delicious scent that then reached him, and her quiet composure, convinced him that he was right.” Ibid., 120.

her living environment.¹¹⁶ Genji is caught peeping and admitted into the corridor. By the light of dawn, Suetsumuhana finally reveals herself to him, and Genji discovers the “real disaster” of her ugly appearance.¹¹⁷ In this chapter, partitions play a dual role and are experienced from both sides. They masked the true nature of Suetsumuhana’s body and convinced Genji that she was a hidden beauty, but they also protected Suetsumuhana from the dangers of the outside world which cause her fear and anxiety. Though this scene is used in the *Genji* to portray his naivité as a youth in pursuit of women, the architectural and perceptual dynamics of this scene reflect some of the realities of life experienced by women inside the interior of *shinden-zukuri* spaces.

When Genji encounters Suetsumuhana, even though he does not see her body, she is not entirely perceived as absent. Rather, the lack of visual information about her body allows Genji to “see” her in a different way: through his mind’s eye, or through a kind of imaginary vision, just as the constructed space around a deity facilitates the worshipper in visualizing their belief that the wooden image is alive, animated, and imbued with the power of a divine spirit. Suetsumuhana’s graceful music, quiet voice, and rich perfume captured Genji’s attention and compelled him to enter deeper into her interior where, with the reassuring knowledge that she was a princess, Genji was enchanted by the illusion of

¹¹⁶“Alas, he had no view of her at all. The standing curtains, though dismally worn, had remained in place for all these years and had never been moved aside, and to his regret he therefore saw before him only four or five gentlewomen. They had withdrawn from their mistress's presence and were now eating a heartrendingly insipid meal from stands laden with Chinese bowls of more or less the reserved, celadon color, but in pathetic condition. Farther off in the corner room shivering women sat in unspeakably grubby white, wearing filthy aprons at their waists and looking impossibly ancient.” Ibid., 122.

¹¹⁷ “First, her seated height was unusual; she was obviously very long in the back. I knew it! he thought in despair. Next came the real disaster: her nose. He noted it instantly. She resembled the mount of the Bodhisattva Fugen. Long and lofty that nose was, slightly drooping toward the end, and with at the tip a blush of red—a real horror. In color she was whiter than snow, in fact slightly bluish, and her fore-head was strikingly broad, although below it her face seemed to go on and on for an extraordinarily long way. She was thin to the point of being pitifully bony, and even through her gown he could see the excruciating angularity of her shoulders. Why had he insisted on finding out what all of her looked like? At the same time, though, she made a sight so outlandish that he could not keep his eyes off her.” Ibid., 124.

her regal beauty. Suetsumuhana's partitions served as props in the theatrics of the scene, just as masks, costumes, and drapery entice a theatergoer into engaging with the performance and immersing themselves into the narrative of the play. Though Genji was bewitched by the circumstances, the way that he gradually discovered Suetsumuhana's presence was not unlike his many other encounters with women, as this was the standard etiquette expected during the reception of visitors.

Partitioned space empowered its occupant through concentric configuration and restricted access, creating a dialectic relationship between inhabitant/visitor. Similar to the divine space of a concealed Buddha, the locus of a noblewoman's interior space was coded as pure, which ensured and sustained the lady's state of social sanctity. The partitions—like *shimenawa*—delineated and sealed the flexible boundaries of the noblewoman's purified space. The breach of this boundary would have been considered a transgression, just as with a sacred ritual space. *Hibutsu* was concealed due to its awesome spiritual potency. In the social interaction of a noblewoman through partitions, the perception of frailty she projected did not automatically mean that she lacked physical strength, agency, or power. The liminality of *hibutsu* that is unseen but perceived heightened the presence of the Buddha. In a comparable way, the noblewoman's liminal presence orchestrated by her interior space was what communicated, and even amplified, her beauty and authority in Heian courtly culture. At the same time, it is important to remind ourselves of the fundamental vulnerability of such a system. For a nonbeliever, a *hibutsu* is simply a material object that can be vandalized, stolen or destroyed. Readers of the *Genji* time and again encounter acts of transgression across partitions, and are constantly reminded of the ephemerality of women's lives, emphasized in moments when

women like Yūgao or Aoi suddenly die with little to no warning, even when Genji believed they were safe and protected indoors.

However, the vulnerability of noblewomen does not necessarily reflect a lack of agency or autonomy. In some ways, a woman's perceived frailty can highlight the profane status of her visitor, rather than her own weakness of mind or presence, because it is the visiting force (person or spirit) who is at fault for transgressing and contaminating the seals around her body, as was the case with Kashiwagi and Onna San no Miya. When Yūgao dies, Genji is wracked with guilt for having removed his own mask and exposed his face to her, causing the Rokujō Lady's spirit to slip inside through a gap in the partitions and attack Yūgao.¹¹⁸ In the case of *hibutsu*, as with many icons, it is the devotee who humbly seeks absolution from the deity residing within. As with the invisible presence of a deity, a noblewoman had the ability to reveal herself to varying degrees at her own discretion, and her visitor was socially expected to defer to her control. Though Heian women were displaced from many spaces in Heian society, when it came to the interior spaces of their homes, this architectural form enabled women to present themselves as a subject of authority who controlled the attention and perception of those who entered her realm.

¹¹⁸ When Genji forcefully absconds with Yūgao to the deserted mansion, he is wearing a mask to hide his identity. He eventually removes the mask, but she refuses to divulge her true name. At sunset, Genji raises the outer blinds so the two can see each other in the twilight, then he closes the lattice shutters at nightfall. It is not made explicitly clear if they have intercourse, but face-to-face contact is symbolically equitable with the intimate relationship between a husband and wife. Because the jealous and disembodied spirit of the Rokujō Lady witnesses Genji in such a scene of exposed indulgence, presumably spying on him during the moments between when he opened the blinds and closed the shutters (a variation of *kaimami* because she is invisible and breaches a gap in the room), the Rokujō Lady's spirit attacks Yūgao and kills her. Tyler, *Genji*, 61-68.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

Today, partitions in *shinden-zukuri* palaces appear in visual culture to denote a courtly space within the popular imagination of the Heian period.¹¹⁹ For instance, the manga/anime series *Chōyaku Hyakunin isshu: Uta koi* (超訳百人一首 うた恋, lit. “a super liberal translation of the classical anthology of one hundred poems by one hundred poets: Singing Love,” hereafter *Utakoi*) uses images of partitions, palaces, and partially-concealed women in colorful period clothing to flavor the otherwise contemporary (and anachronistic) romantic themes explored by the series (Figure 24).¹²⁰ Famous historical figures, including Sei Shōnagon and Murasaki Shikibu, are portrayed in *Utakoi* using modern speech and body language with distinguishable physiognomies and unnatural hair colors (Figure 25). Necessitated by the format of contemporary popular entertainment, the multiple layers of physical and metaphysical veils, which in reality would have almost fully obscured a noblewoman at all times, have been drawn back for the benefit of the viewer so they can easily distinguish the individual identities of each character. Though partitions are not used as a purificatory seals or barriers to protect the fragile bodies of noblewomen, intriguingly, the partitions (such as the bamboo blinds) still appear in and out of scenes as a kind of stage prop to clarify the level of intimacy

¹¹⁹ “Exterior-facing features included black-lacquered lattice shutters (*kōshi*) that were raised open from the inside to create a flow between interior and exterior space. By the late medieval period, these black-lacquered shutters had largely disappeared from residential buildings, replaced by external horizontal sliding doors. Their presence in paintings of the early modern period came to signify an archaic form that symbolized the residential architecture of the nobility in the classical and medieval eras.” Akazawa, “Appendix One: *Shinden* Architecture and *The Tale of Genji*” in *The Tale of Genji: The Japanese Classic Illuminated*. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019) 327.

¹²⁰ The series began as a manga (2010-) and then was adapted into a thirteen-episode, one-season anime (2012). Each episode is based around one poem from the *Hyakunin Isshu* anthology, and the episode’s narrative is inspired by a liberal reimagination of the original poem’s text and related persons’ biographies, information which is generally familiar knowledge within the Japanese public today.

between the characters. In other words, over the course of their transformation from real object to visual icon, the partitions appear to have ceased in their function as thresholds to delineate sanctified capsule environments around women's bodies, but they retained their function as expressive symbols used to denote detachment and distance between two individuals of different statuses.

A similar dilemma in the pictorialization of courtly relationships (which were predicated on mediated invisibility from one another) existed in illustrated handscrolls produced during the Heian period depicting court dramas. For instance, the renowned twelfth-century illustrated handscroll depicting the *Tale of Genji* demonstrates creative solutions to this problem. Roofs are "blown off" to clarify the relative positions of the inhabitants within the separate interior and exterior spaces. The birds' eye perspective of the interior enabled the artist to communicate each character's psychological status to viewers through the expressive details found in their furniture and surroundings, such as disheveled ribbons of a curtain blind, or exposed wooden floor bifurcating two tatami mats (Figure 26).¹²¹ This means that, when Heian court life was portrayed, the partitions not only retained their purpose in life as the extensions of their owner who presided behind them, but gained new significance as expressive pictorial icons that conveyed the characters' emotions and psychological relationships.

In my analysis of *shinden-zukuri* space, I have only indirectly referenced the vast and rich body of visual culture from the Heian period, or images from later eras which depict the Heian courtly way of living. Instead of focusing on these resources, I chose literature as my primary source of information about the spatial aesthetics of *shinden-*

¹²¹ Watanabe Masako, "Narrative Framing in the 'Tale of Genji Scroll': Interior Space in the Compartmentalized Emaki" in *Artibus Asiae* 58, no. 1/2 (1998): 115-45.

zukuri buildings. This was partly to avoid architectural anachronisms as the overall image of *shinden-zukuri* was transformed over time through its various depictions in visual culture. More significantly, however, this approach enabled an expansion of art and architectural history by means of access to aesthetic data which is either weak or unavailable in more visual media. The multisensory aesthetic culture of the Heian period matters to the study of *shinden-zukuri* because this openness of this particular architectural style impacted vision, scent, sound, and tactility different than residential structures with wooden or stone walls more prevalent in Euro-American context. With regard to the present discourse on the Heian living environment, the fact that women were almost permanently encased within this space complicates matters for scholars. From a modern perspective, because we punish criminals by sequestering and concealing them inside small cubicles of space defined by semi-permeable walls, it is tempting to make connections between this type of environment and that of imperial harems, which may seem to have excluded women from society while using architectural elements to change their behavior and appearance for the benefit of men. But what is evident in texts by women is that, very much unlike sequestration inside a prison, being perceived within the layers of the *shinden-zukuri* environment could be used to the advantage of female courtiers because they could selectively attract attention towards, or repel attention from, a mediated and idealized representation of the self.

Finally, the particular approach proposed by this project leads to other avenues of research. I found the comparisons made by Bargen and others between Japanese and Islamic architectural contexts to be intriguing, and I suspect that residential architectural history of the classical and medieval periods in Japan could be expanded through

comparison to additional non-Japanese contexts. My interest here lies in the intersections between bodies, architecture, religion, and the multisensory aesthetic cultures of the premodern era. This method of inquiry may further illuminate the points raised by Caroline Jones, who posed that the “scopic regime” of the hyper-visual modern era is a product of Western enlightenment. This suggests that pre-Enlightenment aesthetic cultures may not have been so heavily rooted in empiricism and taxonomies of the senses. Furthermore, Jones’ argument is inherently a feminist one, because the aim of feminism is to disrupt hegemonic narratives which may cloud our view of history. In the case of *shinden-zukuri* residences, the idea of invisible and immobile women may have misled some into interpreting the courtly interior space as one in which frail and subservient women were forced into captivity by a patriarch, when in fact their invisibility, immobility, and frailty likely contributed to their impression as figures of formidable power and elegance within the Heian aristocracy. As Suzuki argued, continuing to investigate those art historical subjects which are difficult to visibly apprehend will contribute to a more comprehensive picture of premodern aesthetic cultures.

APPENDICES

FIGURES

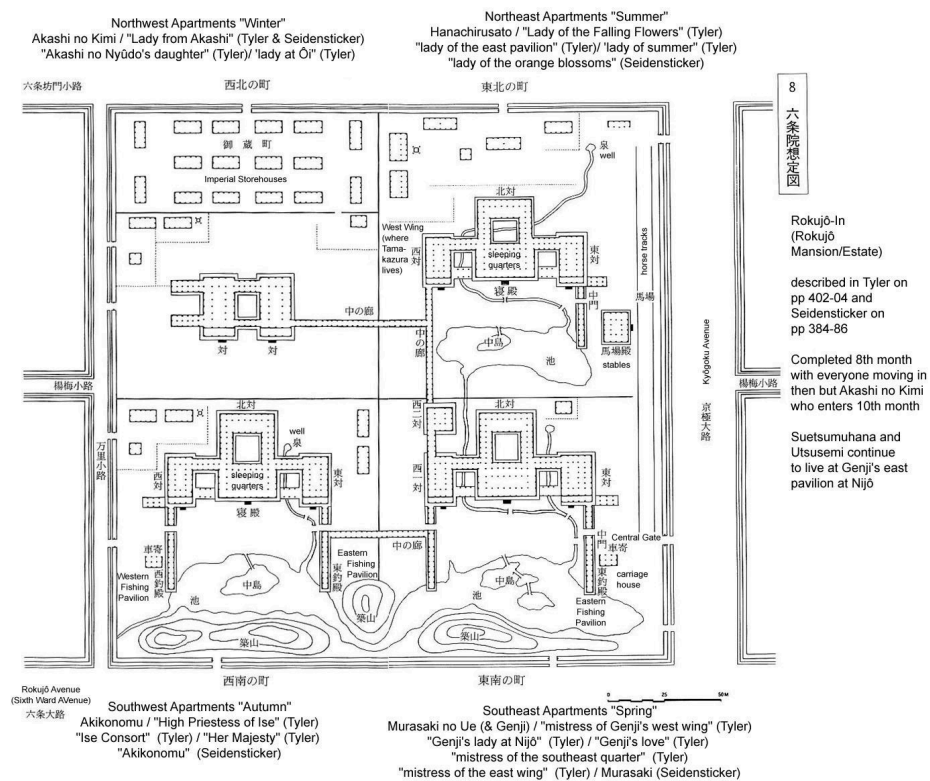
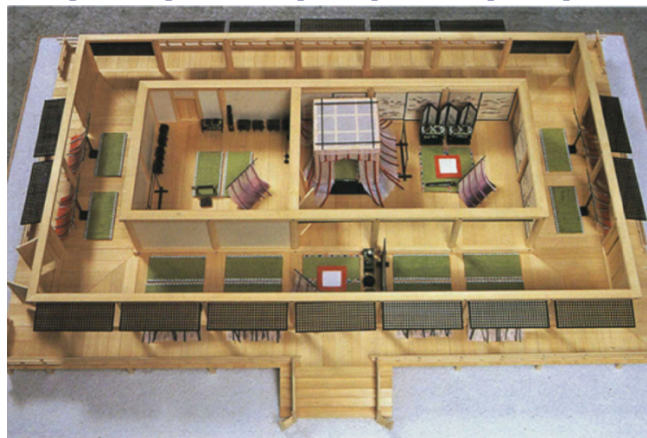
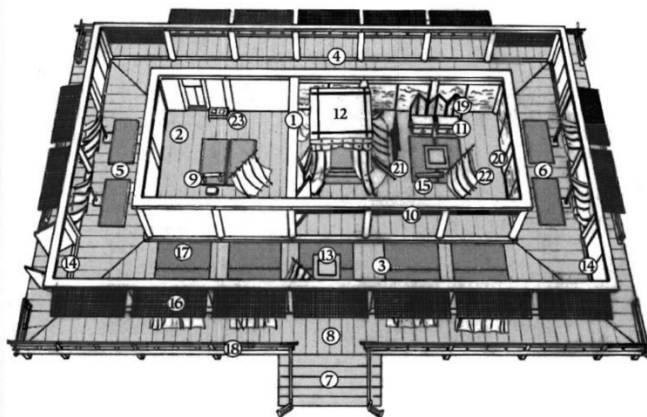


Figure 1: Diagram of Genji's Rokujō Mansion. Annotations to image by John Wallace. Image can be found at "Wallace's Premodern Japanese Literature & Culture Pages" <http://sonic.net/~tabine/>. Accessed May 2019.



Inside the Main House



- | | | | |
|----------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. chamber | 7. steps | 13. cushion | 19. screen |
| 2. retreat | 8. veranda | 14. double doors | 20. sliding panels |
| 3. south aisle | 9. armrest | 15. <i>kin</i> | 21. clothing frame |
| 4. north aisle | 10. blinds (rolled up) | 16. lattice shutter | 22. standing curtain |
| 5. west aisle | 11. cabinet | 17. mat | 23. two-tiered shelf |
| 6. east aisle | 12. curtained bed | 18. railing | |

Figure 2: Images of the *shinden* model from the Costume Museum (Fūzoku hakubutsukan 風俗博物館), Kyōto. Images can be found at The Costume Museum website, <http://www.iz2.or.jp/top.html>. The annotated diagram of the Costume Museum model can be found in Royall Tyler, *The Tale of Genji* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001) 1120.



Figure 3: Lattice shutters (*shitomido*) on the Seiryōden at the Kyōto Imperial Palace. Image by author.

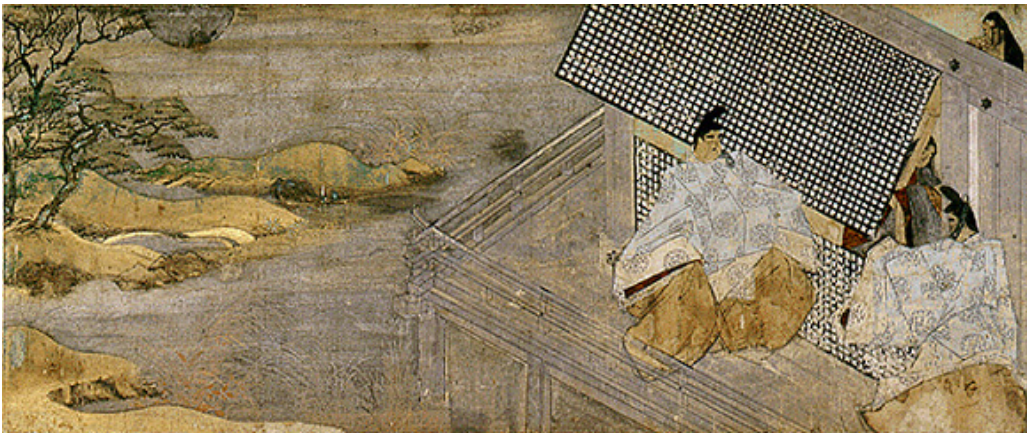


Figure 4: Excerpt from the illustrated handscroll of Murasaki Shikibu's diary (*Murasaki Shikibu emaki* 紫式部絵巻). Gotō Museum (五島美術館), Tokyo.



Figure 5: Images and model of blinds from the Costume Museum.



Figure 6: Image of a woman and a folding screen from the Costume Museum.



Figure 7: Still from a musical performance by students at the Research Center for Japanese Traditional Music at Kyōto City University of Arts (京都市立芸術大学日本伝統音楽研究センター). Links to this and other videos can be found on the webpage ““Music from *The Tale of Heike* (Part 1): Heian and Kamakura period court music sounds like *this*?!” (平家物語の音楽その1 –平安・鎌倉時代の雅楽はこんな曲！？). <https://rcjtm.kcua.ac.jp/archives/takuwa20121013openschool.html> (Accessed May 2019).



Figure 8: Image of a woman and a curtain from the Costume Museum..



Figure 9: Image of a woman and a curtained dais from the Costume Museum.



Figure 10: Model of a woman placing a robe over an incense cage from the Costume Museum.

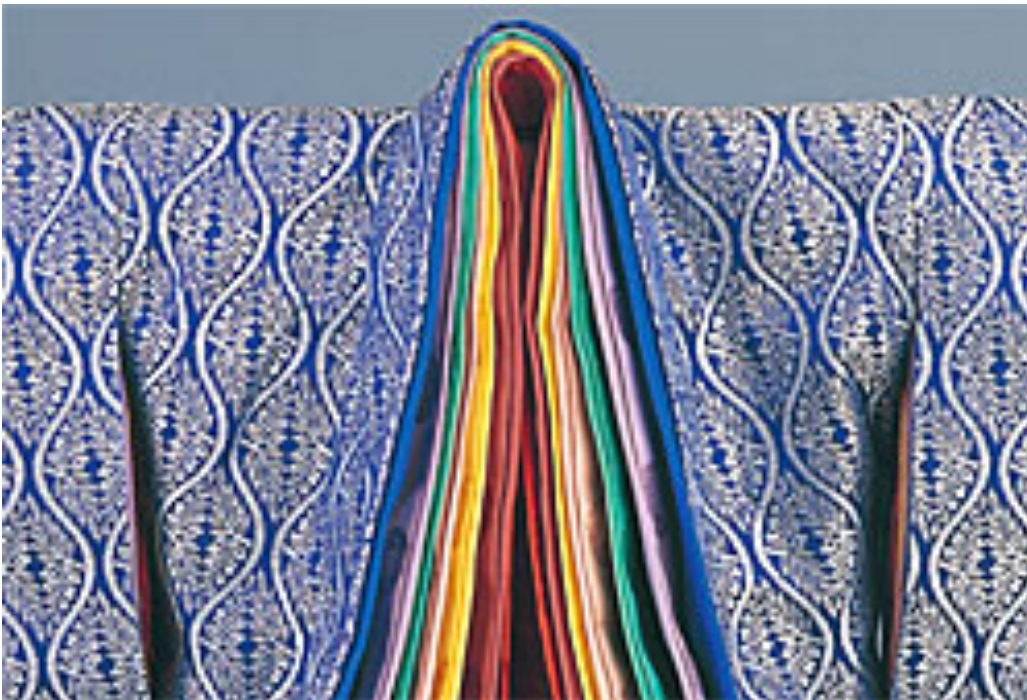


Figure 11: Image of multicolored layered robes from the Costume Museum.



Figure 12: Model of hems of robes placed beneath bamboo blinds from the Costume Museum.



Figure 13: Image of a woman in Heian attire from the Costume Museum.



Figure 14: Black furnishings for mourning in the living quarters of shinden-zukuri. Kyōto City, ed., *Restored Heian Capital (Yomigaeru Heiankyō よみがえる平安京)*. Kyōto, 1994.



Figure 15: “The Scroll of Hungry Ghosts” (*Gaki zōshi* 餓鬼増資), ca. late 12th century. Kyōto National Museum.



Figure 16: White furnishings for purification in the living quarters of *shinden-zukuri*. Image from Yomigaeru Heiankyō.



Figure 17: Models from the Costume Museum. Images from Yui Suzuki, “Possessions and the Possessed: The Multisensoriality of Spirits, Bodies, and Objects in Heian Japan” in *Sensational Religion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

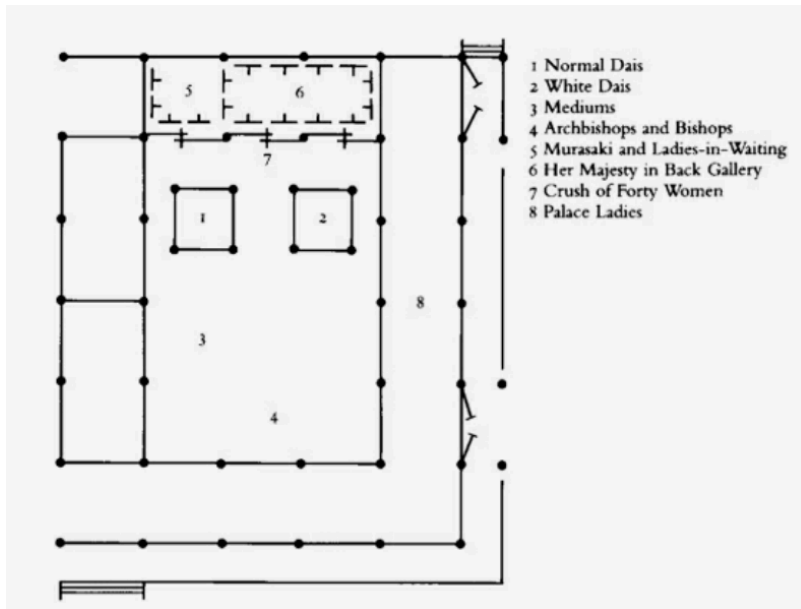


Figure 18: Diagram of the birthing rites for Empress Shōshi. Image from Murasaki Shikibu, trans. Richard Bowring, *Diary of Lady Murasaki* (*Murasaki shikibu nikki* 紫式部日記) (New York: Penguin Books, 1996).



Figure 19: Ise shrine (*Ise jingu* 伊勢神宮). Ise, Mie Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 20: Married Couple Rocks (*Meotoiwa* 夫婦岩). Futami, Mie Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 21: Model of a woman ensconced in partitions from the Costume Museum.



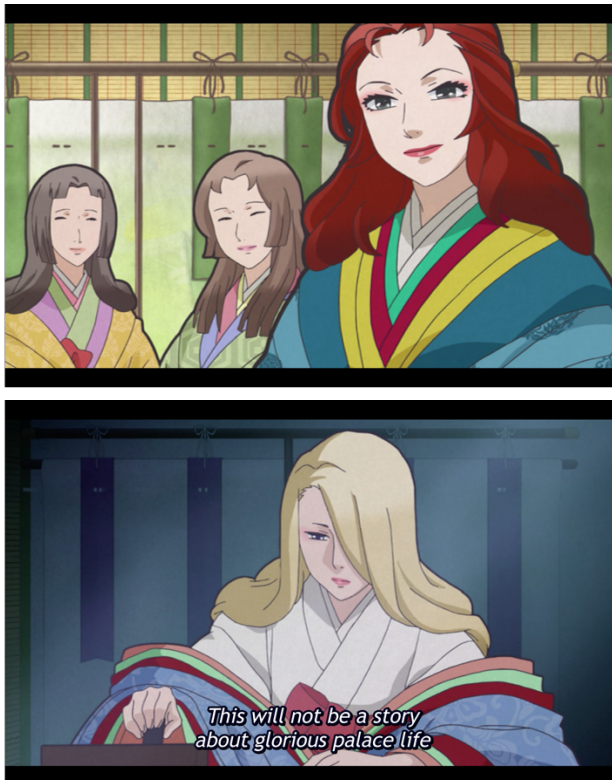
Figure 22: Model of a pilgrim's traveling garment (tsubosōzoku 壺装束 from the Costume Museum.



Figure 23: Tosa Mitsunobu, "Spring Shoots I" (Wakana jō 若菜上), illustration to chapter 34 of The Tale of Genji. 1510. Harvard Art Museums.



Figure 24: Stills from the anime series *Chōyaku Hyakunin Isshu: Uta Koi* (2012). Captions by author.



25: (Top, right) Sei Shōnagon, (Bottom) Murasaki Shikibu. Stills from *Utakoi*.

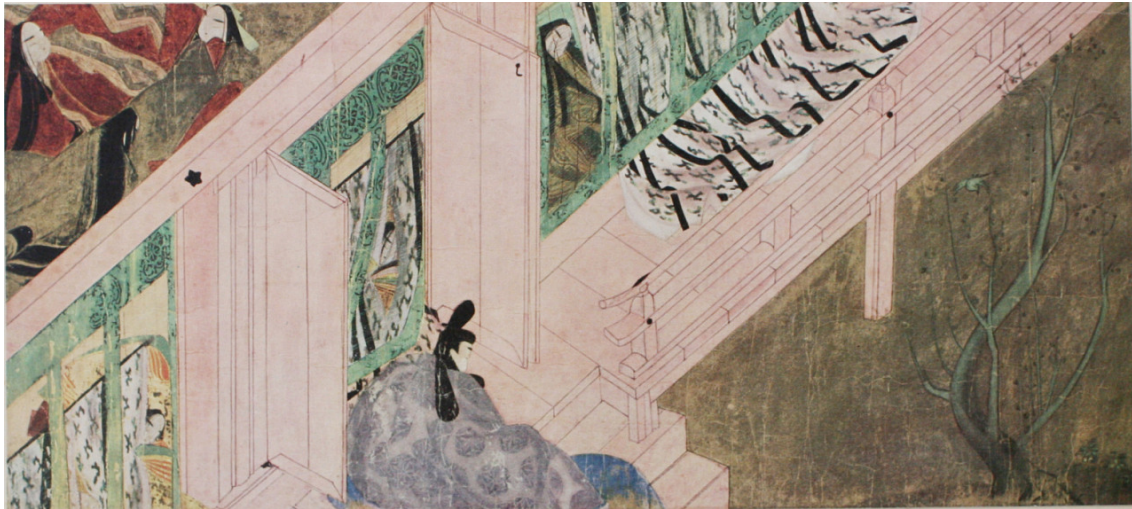


Figure 26: Chapter 44, “Takekawa” (竹河) from the illustrated handscroll of *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari emaki* 源氏物語絵巻), ca. 1120-1140. Tokugawa Art Museum (*Tokugawa bijutsukan* 徳川美術館), Tokyo.

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